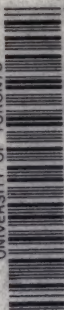


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THE THEATRICAL 'WORLD'
OF 1895.

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THE THEATRICAL WORLD FOR 1893.

By WILLIAM ARCHER. With an Epistle Dedicatory to MR. ROBERT W. LOWE.

THE THEATRICAL WORLD OF 1894.

By WILLIAM ARCHER. With an Introduction by GEORGE BERNARD SHAW; an Epilogue by the Author; and a Synopsis of Playbills of 1894, compiled by HENRY GEORGE HIBBERT.

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THE
THEATRICAL 'WORLD'
OF 1895.

BY
WILLIAM ARCHER.

WITH A PREFATORY LETTER

By ARTHUR W. PINERO,

AND A SYNOPSIS OF PLAYBILLS OF THE YEAR

By HENRY GEORGE HIBBERT.

LONDON:
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OF 1893.



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PREFATORY LETTER.

MY DEAR ARCHER,

Your constant readers will not have forgotten that you preface *The Theatrical World for 1893* with an Epistle Dedicatory to your friend Mr. Robert W. Lowe; and they may remember also that in the course of this Epistle, when you recall the pleasant hours spent in his company in the pit of the Princess's Theatre in Edinburgh, you remind Mr. Lowe that, just previous to those joint experiences in that shabby little play-house, the more important Theatre Royal had been destroyed by fire, and that among the burnt-out actors was one whose name—my own—crops up pretty frequently in the record which follows your Epistle. To some readers this passage may have conveyed little more than the suggestion of a desire on your part to preserve Mr. Lowe from the hideous charge, which otherwise might have been preferred against him, of contentedly frequenting

the pit of a theatre of inferior rank. To save Mr. Lowe's character—ay, and with the same stroke of the pen, your own—was perhaps your object; but, with me, you succeeded in going further, for by the mere mention of my name in association with that ill-fated Theatre Royal and with those stricken actors who, on a gloriously-fine February afternoon, silently turned their backs upon its smouldering shell, you contrived to stir my heart to a peculiar beat. Edinburgh!

I am not, as you are aware, a Scotsman. My affection for Edinburgh, my heart-jump at the sound of the name of that splendid capital, do not spring from the natural, inherited love of country of which Scotsmen, and especially Scottish writers, assert the possession with an energy and persistency which, I fear, have caused many a Southerner to throw up patriotism in sheer despair. But it was in Edinburgh I “began life”—if I can at all mark such a period, for “life” began with me very early. It was in Edinburgh—on a melancholy, mysterious, humid night in the month of June, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-four—that I was born, just outside the Waverley Railway Station, to the troubles and rewards of a

theatrical career. Had this (to me) interesting event occurred in Wigan or Bolton, I suppose Wigan or Bolton would have stood in my regard much as Edinburgh stands to-day. And yet I am glad I was born, at nineteen years of age, in Edinburgh; I rejoice, my dear Archer, that it was in Edinburgh.

Just outside the Waverley Railway Station my infant eyes, having first taken in the deplorably wet and dirty pavement, sought the sky. Where the sky, according to observations made in a previous existence, should have been, I saw, suspended in the dripping mist, the illuminated windows of those wonderful, high "lands"—a spectacle which, I agree with you, forms at night-time one of the most surprising sights in your beautiful city. On my other hand, the lamps of Princes Street, each blurred light casting an evil-looking halo, ran away in a regular, diminishing line: towards Princes Street I turned my steps, wearied, mystified, saddened. For I was born, at nineteen years of age, to no great fortune—only to the modest and temporary competency of a six weeks' engagement at the Theatre Royal, for "general utility," at a salary of one pound a week. I had lately parted too—in my previous existence—from a mother

who was weeping and from two sisters who were preparing to do so ; and I was moreover harassed and perplexed by the possession of the heaviest, most cumbersome travelling-trunk which has ever, I truly believe, bent the back of a railway-porter. The exorbitant tips this wretched box cost me on the day of my second birth, and thereafter, defy computation. It was of oak, and was bound in massive iron clamps which rusted and wounded the fingers ; and it was the most obstinate and cruelly-disposed box my experience has brought me into contact with. For instance, when open, its lid would hang lazily back, supported by a chain, at a angle which apparently made it impossible that it should close without human aid. Yet whenever I was unwary enough to trust my head within its jaws, in search of some article or other lying deep in the swallow of the beast, down would come the lid, to strike me upon the neck, and nearly kill me after the fashion in which a rabbit is slain by a keeper. It played the same cowardly trick, though with even more serious results, upon an honest old landlady of mine, of whom I shall by-and-by make grateful mention, to whose hands I took an early opportunity of confiding the key of the hated receptacle, investing

her at the same time with all attendant privileges. Ultimately, upon her firmly renouncing these privileges, I sold the box to a man who dealt in discarded military uniforms, and other odds and ends, in the Canongate—at an absurdly low figure, on account, as the purchaser urged, of the expense of cart-hire for removal. But he took it away at night, while I was out, and to my chagrin I heard that he brought no cart with him. However, he was accompanied, it appeared, by several members of his family, and together they staggered away with their burden. The relief was considerable at getting quit of the thing—its absence made my room quite spacious—and yet the transaction caused me a pang. For the buying of that box, directly I had formed my dreadful resolution of “going upon the stage,” had, I remembered, afforded my mother a certain small feeling of security and comfort. Perhaps its solidity, its indubitable age, had been as figures to her hopes, and had given her reassurance. Or, in her anxious mind, she attached the thing to me, from mere consideration of its weight, as an anchor to a ship; or it may be that the circumstance of the horrible affair having originally been a plate-chest in a noble family—the vendor offered a

written warranty to this effect—had some influence with her as conferring respectability, if not dignity, upon my undertaking.

With the reluctant aid of a porter, who thought proper to comment with dreary sarcasm upon my precautions, I carefully consigned my box to the Left Luggage department, and set out, afoot—towards Princes Street, as I have said—to find my hotel. Somebody, in my other life, had warmly commended to me, on the score of comfort and economy, an hotel situated in one of the streets lying parallel with George Street. I forget the name of the street; I wished to forget it; I destroyed the paper upon which the title and whereabouts of the hotel were inscribed. I never had the desire, when affairs had become settled and comfortable with me, nor indeed the courage, to revisit this street and identify the hotel. Perhaps, less than a month afterwards I could not have found the place, for I entered it dog-tired, and in the dark, and when I left it I was thoroughly shaken and demoralised. It may have possessed all the advantages my friend had claimed for it—I was totally without experience, as became one newly born, in such matters. I am inclined now to think that it was even a ridiculously cheap establishment. But

it was dear to *me*, poor, simple infant that I was—horridly, unexpectedly, overwhelmingly costly. The first shock of discovery had passed when I paid my bill, and I handled my few gold pieces like a man in a dream. I knew at that moment exactly how a great speculator feels upon receiving news of utter ruin; and, oddly enough, I have never since then found myself able to give a first glance at an hotel bill without feeling the same sensations, the painful catch in the breath, the icy spine, the chill tingling in the legs, which I endured upon discovering my liabilities at my first hotel.

My next venture was a Temperance Hotel, in Leith Street, kept by a Mrs. MacD—— with the assistance of a spare, dry, hard-featured daughter. Mrs. MacD——'s duties were of a kind which served to rob her boarders of the light of her presence. I saw her but on two occasions—on my arrival, when I expressed a desire to avail myself of the “special terms” mentioned in her advertisements—the special terms, in my case, resolving themselves into an undertaking on Mrs. Mac's part (for which no extra charge was to be made) that I should fill the place in her affections formerly occupied by a nephew who had been drowned

in Greenock Harbour; and, again, when I took my departure. Giving the place a farewell look over my shoulder as I drove away, I espied Mrs. MacD——'s crimson, wrinkled face rising from behind a wire-blind like a shrivelled sun, and I quailed under its malignant rays. It was a peculiarity of Miss MacD——'s, excused perhaps by the fact that she was the entire visible staff of the establishment, that her sleeves were turned up above her elbows from morning till night; the skin of her poor arms, I remember, struck me as not being in the least degree a fit. But the principal impression remaining with me of my week with the MacD——s is that the house, from its awful bareness and frigidity, seemed to offer every inducement to its visitors to rush out and drink. I shared this hotel with one other guest, an old gentleman whose general mellow-ness made me wonder at his selecting the shelter of such ungenial walls. One day, however, in the course of a guarded talk with me, he let in a faint light upon my doubts by informing me that if you went to bed early in a Temperance Hotel, and then rang the bell violently and complained of sickness, the landlord or landlady was obliged, under heavy penalty, to produce a bottle of whisky and to leave it on a chair by your

bedside. Such, he assured me, is the law of Scotland; and he added that he would suggest, in view of my feeling indisposed, the particular brand of whisky known as Campbeltown—that or a blend of Campbeltown with Islay—as being the most healing form of the spirit for an invalid.

But from my companions in the theatre I soon learned that I was on the wrong tack altogether in making for hotels, temperance or otherwise; that by no means could the charges of an hotel, however humble, obscure, and dirty that hotel might be, be brought to agree with the earnings of a country actor. A young actor named G——, a good, simple fellow, with whom I formed firm friendship, gave me further enlightenment by informing me that only “stars”—eminent artists who travelled from town to town, who played leading Shakespearian characters, and were, therefore, enormously wealthy—ever thought of putting up at hotels, and that the ordinary actor invariably dwelt in a modest lodging under the watchful care of a landlady whose views of the theatrical profession were broad and generous. To a suitable lodging I was speedily inducted by G——. Hail to thee, G——, wheresoever thou now art! To-night I

retrace my steps across the bridge that spans a score of years to greet thee and grasp thee by the hand!

The road to Portobello must be a familiar one to you, my dear Archer. Often, in summer, you must have made your way down Leith Street—passing, on your left, MacD——’s Temple of Temperance—and along Greenside Street and Greenside Place—at which spot you will have paused for a few moments reverently to contemplate the imposing façade of the Theatre Royal—till you had gained Leith Walk. You will not, however, have traversed much of Leith Walk on your journey to Portobello, for on reaching Union Street you will, taking a sharp turn to your right, have found yourself in London Road; and so, pursuing this road, you will, without another deviation, have trudged onward, till you were startled, perhaps, in the midst of reflection by suddenly finding the salt of the sea greeting your nostrils. (This London Road leads also, I venture to remind you, to Musselburgh, and at Musselburgh, at certain seasons, were held race-meetings which, for the weak, possessed attractions of an irresistible kind. But such pastimes will have presented no allurements to one of your austere habit;

you will often have enjoyed your sea-dip upon the shelving shore of Portobello, but the evil angel travelling, bagman-like, in the interests of Musselburgh will, I am sure, have slunk by you abashed.) Now, on your walks to Portobello you will hardly have failed to observe, lying compactly on your left, just opposite Norton Place, a small colony of some six or seven regular little streets, each street bearing a pretty and suggestive title and formed of neatly-built, somewhat dwarfish, stone tenements. The construction of these little houses was peculiar. They were obviously houses possessing one story, but this advantage was for the eye only, for the ingenious architect had so contrived it that the first-floor of any one of his cottages was not accessible to the ground-floor tenant, unless that tenant put himself to the trouble of walking round into the next street, where he might gain admittance to his first-floor by means of a toilsome flight of stairs built outside the back of his premises. As a matter of fact, however, the first and second floor had nothing to do with each other, but were as twins, held together by a vital, unseverable ligature, who were not on speaking terms. In this way, the first-floor of, say, Number 5 Balaclava Place

became Number 10 Maryland Street, and so forth; with the odd result that while all the inhabitants of one side of Maryland Street were compelled to live on the garden level, their opposite neighbours could not come downstairs, without finding themselves in the open air, for the life of them.

For eight months I was a lodger at Number —— Balaclava Place; it was there I was happier than any king in history, richer than any South African billionaire of to-day. O busy, cheerful, healthful times! I have recently been chatting with an old gentleman who spent these same months in Edinburgh; he professes to distinctly remember how disagreeable the weather was! What nonsense! why, it was transcendently fine weather, the days full of sunshine, the nights star-lit and peaceful, and most favourable to the practice of reading into the small hours. And if one's pockets were, on occasions, empty—well, there was all the more room for one's hands when the frost came—as it did severely in the early autumn of that year, you will recollect—to nip them in its jolly, teasing way. Not that my pockets were often incapable of a little, unpretentious, tuneful jingle, for had I not Mrs. S—— to instruct me

how to live, to repletion, upon the narrowest of incomes ; how to come out, even, at the week's end with a modest balance to the good ? Mrs. S—— was my landlady. Heaven bless her ! I see her now standing at my cab door—with her apron to her eyes, if you please—bidding me good-bye and God-speed. As the flyman whipped up his horse, she threw an old silver brooch into my lap—a brooch fashioned like the Arms of a certain great family, and bearing the motto, “Amo.” I recognised it as one of her few treasures. The good woman had been in service at Dalkeith Palace, and was in the enjoyment, I understood, of a small pension. She had the soft tread and subdued voice of one once accustomed to move about vast chambers and to seek to avoid the echoes lurking upon broad staircases. Sometimes she would talk to me of the Palace, especially when, upon a show-day, I had been viewing its rich stores ; and then she would tell me, in her habitual half-whisper, where that door, and that, closed against such as I, led to. And, standing in the middle of my little room as she talked, a light would come into her grey eyes which seemed to make my walls recede, to enable her even to look beyond them. Dear soul ! She

was silver-haired twenty years ago ; were I to find myself in Balaclava Place to-morrow I should be afraid to ask for her.

But G—— would never allow me to boast too loudly of my quarters in Balaclava Place. His landlady, he maintained, at first somewhat to my annoyance, came nearer perfection than any other landlady in the United Kingdom. And by-and-by, without abating one jot of my allegiance to Mrs. S——, as my visits to G——'s lodgings became more and more frequent, I grew to share his affection for Mrs. L——. Only in one respect did I rank his apartment inferior to my own—the pungent odour of highly-smoked Scotch herring hung about it constantly, appeared wedded to its spare but tidy hangings. However, this circumstance I soon found was not to Mrs. L——'s discredit. G——'s insatiable fondness for herrings, she explained to me confidentially, was one of the great troubles of her life—it was her heaviest sorrow then, I fancy ; she had others not long afterwards. He, G——, *would* breakfast every morning upon the obnoxious fish, honestly paying the penalty exacted by Mrs. L—— of sitting for the rest of the day with an open window. Keen as was this particular winter,

G—— stuck to his herring. Once, when he was suffering from a catarrh, I entreated him to obtain Mrs. L——'s permission that the window should be closed. "No, no," said he, "I wouldn't, for the world; it's a solemn promise." "But," I protested, "what is gained by all this air? There's no good result that I can detect." "Yes," replied G——, a little hopefully, "there is. To-night, when I return from the theatre, this room will be as sweet as a meadow. Only"—and here his voice dropped, and his chin sank upon his breast—"only, to-morrow morning I shall undo the good of to-day. I've struggled hard against it, but——." It has been my misfortune several times in my life to hear men make confession of some vice, some overmastering weakness; their tone and bearing have invariably been those of G—— upon this occasion.

G——'s open window gave him a commanding view of the plot of garden, about fourteen feet by twelve, which fronted the house. Within this enclosure two small girl-children, with curly, straw-coloured heads, played games, and sang songs in a broad, strange tongue, on fine days with but little intermission from breakfast-time till sun-down. These mites—prettier children,

more daintily fashioned, more delicately tinted, I have never seen—were Mrs. L——’s dolls (so she called them), and were the pets of Maryland Street. Passers-by seldom failed to halt at the railings to give a nod and speak a word or two to these miniature people; whereupon the mother, working about the house, would run to the open door and stand there for a moment jealously, to be sure that all was well. One bright morning, upon going round to G——, I found no talking-dolls acting lady and shopkeeper upon the worn little grass-patch. Poor dolls! they were ill, it appeared, in bed, feverish; G—— was out, buying toys for them, and oranges. That evening, doll number one died; the next day away went doll number two, and the grass grew over the bare places of the garden and flourished thenceforth undisturbed. The mother’s household tasks were neglected for a few weeks; but by-and-by she reappeared, with broom and pail, and with grey streaks in her black hair, and matters went on much as usual. But it was not deemed safe to make any reference to those departed dolls in her presence. Years afterwards, returning to Edinburgh, I went to see Mrs. L—— and was received by her in G——’s room. He, good

fellow, had vanished out of my life, and out of the life of Maryland Street, and, worldly affairs having prospered with the L——s, his old room was now their best parlour. “And how are you, Mrs. L——,” said I, “after all these years?” Upon which her shoulders moved uncomfortably, and, in a whisper, and with a faint, deprecatory smile, to excuse the admission she made, she replied, “Weel—I’m just missin’ ma bairns.”

I have a boy-friend who, a few days ago, was telling me how he had lately been taken by his “governor” to some busy provincial centre and had been made to explore a quarter of the city which had now fallen into disrepute, but in which his father had started life and passed some years of early manhood. “The governor dragged me up one dirty lane and down another,” said my young friend, “and pointed out this hovel and that, and had some tale to tell almost of the very cobbles in the streets. Until”—the boy added plaintively—“until he just upon bored me to suicide.” Now, had I a son, I am perfectly certain—granting, of course, that he was so tractable and unsuspecting as to allow me to lure him to Edinburgh—I am perfectly certain, I say, that I could bore him to suicide in no time. What petty pieces of

information concerning *my* early days I could impart to him, and with what unimportant detail I could overload them! With what zest I could march that reluctant lad off to distant, outlying spots, hallowed by me in the very heart of my memory, and how readily I could wax sentimental over many a bygone tramp and picnic! To what picturesque account I could turn the presence of some broken bottle or fluttering paper bag; and how, giving play to imagination, I could profess to see the ghost of my former self in yon stripling who strolls by sheepishly, and to discover in the comely person of the lass beside him the substantial spirit of—— but here, remembering my boy's tender years, and his mother at home, I would push on. I would push on to the edge of the broad loch upon whose sapphire surface it was my wont in times of prolonged frost to venture timorously; and here I could tell of certain nocturnal excursions in midwinter in the company of boon companions, recalling nights which stained the whole countryside with their azure; breathless nights whose still air had in it, nevertheless, the sting of the nettle, but whose silence was so profound that, till the comparative riot of our own breathing made us presumptuous, we walked, talked, and

essayed to laugh, in a solemn measure. And thence I could drag my weary charge along the homeward road my friends and I followed on those long-ago winter nights, and I could gently hum to him snatches of the songs and carols which I and those choice spirits had once sung to the ring of our hard soles upon the frozen paths. And then, nearing the dense city, my reminiscences would flow faster, to keep pace with the press of the streets. How every turning, every cross-way would jog the memory! Over there, I could point out, had lodged one who was an especial crony of mine—a jovial medical student, short in stature but large of heart, wedded to a pretty little lady, an actress, erstwhile of the Theatre Royal. Bless me! and thereupon I could tell how this little lady bore an unusual but soft-sounding christian name—at least, the name was a novel one to me at that time; it is more fashionable, I think, nowadays—which I didn't, couldn't, then suspect was to become a name very close and dear to me in after-life; for had this son of mine existence, that name would be his mother's name. And then I could recall—with what gusto!—the gruesome incident of a small supper party at the lodgings of my friend the medical student, when the guests were assembled, the

host unaccountably late in returning from some errand, the little hostess crushing natural anxiety and misgiving between the teeth of an artificial smile ; and when, upon the host putting in a tardy appearance, it was discovered that he had been delayed over the securing of a strange prize—the leg of a dead man, which he had brought home, for subsequent leisurely dissection, enclosed in a roll of mackintosh and tucked covetously under his arm. And then, to rid our mental palates of the flavour of this tale, I could push on, and on, until we gained a certain point of observation lying between Calton Hill and Greenside Place, and there I could identify two rather mean-looking windows as belonging to a room in which once dwelt a young woman, a mere girl indeed, now dead and gone, a sweet, simple creature who was nothing but a very poorly-paid drudge of a “leading lady,” but whose history, one of patience, cheerfulness, and virtue preserved against temptation, misfortune, and the stress of constant struggle, would form a useful lesson to those inclined to speak slightly of her class. And then—and then——!

But, my dear Archer, you are surely beginning to suspect me of a desire to make you fill the

place of the small boy who is not at hand, of a deliberate intention of boring *you* to suicide. The thought that you will so regard my rhapsodies checks me—and yet it may be that your heart will, in some measure, respond to these rhapsodies. At any rate, let me assure you, in extenuation, that you, yourself, form, in my mind, a link in the sentimental chain binding me to Edinburgh. Were we not together there at a period of life upon which no man, safely harboured in middle-age, can look back without awe and wonderment and a profound sense of thankfulness for having escaped the direst of its perils? Were we not fellow-explorers of that fairyland whose glow-worms are the “floats,” none the less a fairyland to me because I had the temerity to peer into the faces of its pixies while you, a more modest mortal, contented yourself with viewing the tinselled people from a remote bench of the Princess’s pit? And if you are of a disposition which is but slightly stirred by such associations, perhaps you will more readily forgive me this garrulous communication on the score of my feeling of pride at knowing that—bound as you are by previous publication—you cannot escape from devoting to me and to

my work at least two entries of a commendatory character in your theatrical log-book for 1895.

“Ho, ho!” I hear you exclaim, “here is a person, who has repeatedly assured me that he avoids reading criticisms upon his own poor work, confessing he is gratified by the qualified approval I have bestowed upon him on two occasions during the past year!” Pardon me; upon my honour, I have never meant to convey to you that I do not, on any account, read criticism upon my work. Some of our walks together, in these later days, by shore and cliff, have been taken, and enjoyed by one at least of the twain, in blustering nor'-westerly breezes—conditions unfavourable to clear understanding. Allow me to explain, with my hand upon my heart. I am willing—nay, anxious—to read, even to commit to memory, criticism upon my work *when that criticism is distinctly flattering*. But such a commodity is, as you are aware, not always to be had. Sometimes it lies, too, in deep places, like the *Avicula Margaritifera*, and demands much hazardous diving; and then one may be forced to examine a score or more of adverse critiques before one lights upon the pearl of praise. To leave the troublesome metaphor, it is necessary, I consider, for one of

my humour diligently to sharpen the instinct, which belongs perhaps to every writer, for detecting the presence of adverse criticism. I am, I congratulate myself, developing this instinct to a very fine degree. Indeed at certain times—during the week or fortnight following the production of a play of mine, for example—I am now able to stroll into my club and enjoy an hour's reading without opening a single journal containing a disagreeable estimate of my work. At such periods I find *The Mining Journal* an invaluable resource. Sometimes I meet with a mishap; but, as my scent grows keener, accidents, I am pleased to say, become more rare. And there have been occasions, with bowed head I confess it, when I have yielded to temptation and have deliberately unclosed the pages of a review which I knew must—well, which I was *almost* sure would—and yet, I have reasoned, which *might* not—no! there it was, the hateful thing! However, half-a-dozen words have been enough for me, and I have then promptly hidden that review where it would be least likely to meet the eyes of members. Of recent years—thank heaven!—these temptations have shown a decided disposition to pass me by entirely. And truly virtue is its

own reward in these practices of abstinence, and often the reward comes with surprising swiftness. Within this past week—critical surveys of the art-work of the departed year are now appearing, so this is a time, I may tell you, when *The Mining Journal* and I are close companions—a man indignantly laid hold of my coat as I was leaving the club reading-room. “My dear fellow!” he cried, “have you seen that abominable attack upon you in *The* —— —?” My bosom swelled. “No,” I was able to reply, “I never read *The* —— —.” “Why not?” “Why not? See! Lo, I am about to lunch happily!” “But,” said my friend, “you ought to read this atrocious article; you really *ought* to.” “*Ought* to?” I called out gaily, as I descended the stairs. “That, my good friend, is a question.”

To be quite honest, I admit that my system has its flaws. What great system has not? One of the flaws of my system is that it robs me of the privilege of reading much brilliant writing. For instance, I am compelled, by my system, wholly to abstain from studying those articles upon dramatic matters contributed to a well-known journal by your friend Mr. George Bernard Shaw—of whom I protest I am, in

general, a warm admirer. And on a few days in the year, however engrossing questions of broad public interest may be, I am without even the cheap luxury of a daily paper! In the same way, I may find myself, twelve months hence, forced to regard *The Theatrical World of 1896* as a closed book to myself—but this is entirely in your own hands. To my mind, the deepest flaw in my system is that the Instinct for Detecting the Presence of Adverse Criticism, and the resolution to avoid reading such criticism, are only to be cultivated at the expense of the instinct for discovering criticism which, though adverse, is liberal, wholesome, and helpful—which is not, in fact, mere abuse and detraction. I do not quite see my way to a means of overcoming this defect. Perhaps you can aid me. I await your counsel.

Believe me, my dear Archer, to be

Yours most truly,

ARTHUR W. PINERO.

6th January 1896.



AUTHOR'S NOTE.

IT is again my pleasant duty to thank the Trustees under the will of Mr. Edmund Yates for their sanction of this reprint of my criticisms in the *World*. I am also indebted to the Editors of the *Pall Mall Budget* and the *New Budget* for permitting me to include several articles contributed to these papers. To Mr. Pinero I offer not only my own thanks, but (by confident anticipation) the thanks of all my readers, for his charming Prefatory Letter ; and I am sure that all students of the stage will appreciate the service rendered them by Mr. Henry George Hibbert in continuing his Synopsis of Playbills.

LAST PERFORMANCES OF PLAYS
STILL RUNNING AT PUBLICATION OF
"THEATRICAL WORLD OF 1894."

	Last Performance, 1895.
THE CASE OF REBELLIOUS SUSAN (Criterion: the run was several times interrupted towards its close) ...	March 23.
THE CHIEFTAIN (Savoy)	March 16.
CLAUDE DUVAL (Prince of Wales's) ...	February 15.
THE DERBY WINNER (Princess's) ...	February 16.
THE FATAL CARD (Adelphi)	March 16.
HAL THE HIGHWAYMAN (Vaudeville) ...	June 15.
HIS EXCELLENCY (Lyric)	April 6.
THE LADY SLAVEY (Strand)	January 25.
THE NEW BOY (Vaudeville)	March 2.
THE NEW WOMAN (Comedy)	February 5.
THE SHOP GIRL (Gaiety) and CHARLIE'S AUNT (Globe) ran throughout the year.	

THE THEATRICAL “WORLD”

OF
1895.

I.

THE PANTOMIMES—“SLAVES OF THE RING.”

2nd January.

PARAGRAPHS which had an air of inspiration about them led us to expect a change of policy at Drury Lane this year. *Whittington and his Cat*,* written by Messrs. Raleigh and Hamilton and Sir Augustus Harris, was to be a veritable children's pantomime, not a music-hall saturnalia. But the seasoned—the sixteen-seasoned—statesmanship of Sir Augustus Harris shrinks from abrupt transitions. Evolution, not revolution, is his motto, and he does his reforming gently. A certain effort in the direction of coherence is, indeed, discernible. Children will be able to recognise in the action several incidents from the life of their old friend Whittington; whereas it must have puzzled their brains to discover the remotest

* December 26, 1894—March 16.

resemblance between the *Robinson Crusoe* of last year and the veracious history they all know so well. Moreover, the music-hall element has been slightly reduced. Sir Augustus Harris clings heroically to Mr. Herbert Campbell and Mr. Dan Leno, but he has thrown poor "Little Tich" to the wolves of criticism. I suppose it is only a proof that gratitude is foreign to the wolfish breast, but I cannot help feeling that this was beginning at the wrong end. The idea of "Little Tich" was painful; the reality was, to me, genuinely entertaining. There was so much vigour, elasticity, and apparent enjoyment in the antics of the little man, that one lost all sense of making capital out of deformity, and accepted him simply as an inimitable grotesque. Now, if Sir Augustus had begun at the other end, and sacrificed Mr. Herbert Campbell—but no matter! a time will come! The tide is setting strongly towards refinement, and even Messrs. Campbell and Leno are this year comparatively subdued. On the spectacular side of the production, no expense or trouble has been spared. Be sure to take your children in good time, for nothing in the pantomime will please them more than the Cat Review of the opening scene. Then there is a very pretty Flower Ballet in the Highgate scene, and the boarding of Whittington's ship by the Japanese gives occasion for some magnificent costumes. The Feast of Lanterns at the Court of China

is perhaps the most resplendent spectacle ever seen even on the Drury Lane stage, and the Lord Mayor's Show is almost as gorgeous, and much more amusing. In it is introduced a song and dance satirising the Municipal Theatre idea, which the authors seem somehow to associate with Mrs. Ormiston Chant, though it was in fact Mr. Irving who started it. The song is harmless enough fooling; but the dance ends in one of the most senseless and unpleasing exhibitions I ever saw in a theatre—eight or ten young women, dressed as “Hallelujah Lasses,” lying flat on the stage and tumbling and scrambling over each other like leeches in a jar. Without being positively indecent, this is precisely the sort of thing to strengthen the hands of Puritanism. Miss Ada Blanche plays Whittington; Miss Marie Montrose, Alice; Miss Agnes Hewett, the Emperor of China; Miss Lily Harold, the Prince of China; and Miss Queenie Lawrence, the Princess.

Mr. Oscar Barrett, at the Lyceum, has followed up his delightful *Cinderella* of last year with an equally delightful *Santa Claus*.* It lacks nothing in the way of splendour, yet it charms us by dint of invention, thought, and taste, rather than mere expenditure. We never say, “How gorgeous!” without adding, “How beautiful!” The dresses, designed by Wilhelm,

* December 26, 1894—March 2 (afternoons only after the production of *King Arthur*).

are full of grace and fantasy; the dances, arranged by Madame Katti Lanner, are clear and flowing in spite of their intricacy; and the harmony of colour attained in the spectacular scenes is an education, instead of a mere bewilderment, to the childish eye. The solo dancing, by Mlle. Zanfretta and M. and Mlle. Espinosa, is clever in its kind; and little Miss Geraldine Somerset shows a charming simplicity as well as technical skill in the dance of the Spider and the Fly. Mr. Horace Lennard has blent the legends of the Babes in the Wood and Bold Robin Hood into a simple, consistent, easily comprehensible story, told in pleasant, unpretending rhymes, with a brevity which leaves room for plenty of clever and inoffensive fooling on the part of the comedians, Mr. Victor Stevens, Mr. Fred Emney, Miss Susie Vaughan, and Miss Clara Jecks. Miss Kitty Loftus and Miss Rosie Leyton play the Babes in the Wood with an air of unconstrained glee and enjoyment which gives sunshine to the whole production. The nursery scene, with the visit of Santa Claus, the episode of the wooden soldiers, and the Alphabet Procession, are the very things to delight the youthful heart; and older children, who have got the length of *Ivanhoe*, will rejoice to see Richard Cœur de Lion, in his habit as he lived, visiting Robin Hood in Sherwood Forest. There is only one thing against which I must enter a vehement protest, and that is the death of the Babes'

faithful collie, Tatters. As embodied by Mr. Charles Lauri, Tatters is the most popular and sympathetic character in the pantomime, and his untimely end is too harrowing to be borne. Pray believe that I make this protest quite seriously. Children ought not to have their feelings wrung and their pleasures saddened in this way. I am bound to admit that on the afternoon when I saw the pantomime the children present (and they were many) appeared to take it stoically. They probably could not realise at the moment that Tatters was actually dead; but they will afterwards, and it will leave a dark spot in their memories.* One other hint to Mr. Oscar Barrett: I hope in his next pantomime he will let us have a larger number of familiar airs, whether songs of the day or old ballads. Apart from the ballet music and perhaps here and there an original song, the score of a pantomime should, to my thinking, be a mere mosaic of old favourites.

There is no denying that Mr. Sydney Grundy's new play at the Garrick did not produce the effect at which the author aimed. The applause was courteous, not enthusiastic; whereas the high-pitched emotion of the principal scenes ought clearly to have worked the audience up to a correspondingly high pitch of excitement. If, like Dr. Johnson, I "talked

* Tatters was eventually brought to life again, in deference to many protests.

for victory," I might easily find in this lukewarmness a conclusive proof of my own pet doctrines about the drama. I might point to the fact that *Slaves of the Ring** belongs to Mr. Grundy's period of ingenuity. It is obviously the piece he refers to in a letter to the *Telegraph*, dated October 26th, 1894, from which it appears that the first draft was written and read to Mr. Hare "before the production of *The Danicheffs*"—that is to say, in or before 1876. It afterwards underwent some modification, but there is every reason to suppose that even in its existing form it dates from at least fifteen years ago. At that period Mr. Grundy was still a devotee of the French, or, more precisely, of the Scribe-Sardou, methods of construction; and it would be open to me to argue that what marred the full effect of the play on Saturday night was precisely the ingenious and artificial niceties of adjustment on which writers of that school so greatly valued themselves. But even in dialectics I am subject to intermittent attacks of conscientiousness, and I must forego this triumph over the late lamented Scribe. There would be a certain measure of truth in the artificiality argument, but it would not be the whole, nor even the essential, truth. The plain fact is that the acting gave the play no chance. It was singularly bad—the worst performance I can remember to have seen in the

* December 29, 1894--January 16.

Garrick Theatre. With the exception of Mr. Hare himself and Miss Kate Phillips, not one of the artists engaged did full justice to his or her part. Again and again in the first and second acts I found myself intellectually recognising the strength of situations, the beauty of speeches, which utterly failed to get at my emotions. Again and again I said to myself, "Here is a fine idea, an admirable scene—if only they would act it!"

There is no doubt, however, that the play "dates." It is a belated pioneer. Fifteen years ago it would have been epoch-making; to-day, it brings with it a vague odour of the pigeon-hole. "It was rejected with horror by every important manager in London," says Mr. Grundy; and in that fact lies his best excuse for the years of intellectual lethargy from which he has only recently awakened. The managers of fifteen years ago must surely feel some qualms of conscience with respect to it; but recriminations are vain. Their timidity or obtuseness retarded Mr. Grundy's career; it shall not baulk him of the esteem due to able, original and courageous work. He was ready and eager to lead the forlorn hope; it is not his fault that he was denied the opportunity.

As its title indicates, *Slaves of the Ring* is an attack on marriage—not on the tie itself, but on its practical indissolubility. The thesis formulated by Mr. Grundy's "reasoner," the sage and sententious

Captain Douglas, is a denial of the wisdom and humanity of the "glorious plan" which makes divorce the privilege of "sinners," and denies it to those who exercise self-control and self-respect. But it is the logical weakness, the poetical merit and strength of the play, that it goes much deeper than its thesis. A quite different fable would have illustrated more cogently the iniquities of our divorce law. *The Transgressor*,* for example, in its crude and violent fashion, went more directly to the point. It is not really the divorce-law that Mr. Grundy arraigns, but the constitution of things—that intricate complication of the emotional meshes of life, whereby the joy of one involves another's sorrow, kindness to A means cruelty to B, and the only choice allowed us, in so many cases, is not between happiness and unhappiness for ourselves and others, but between two ways of wrong-doing, two forms of remorse. It is not any law that makes the misery of the two marriages here in question, and the penny-in-the-slot divorce facilities of Illinois or Wisconsin would not greatly mend matters. A happy union between Harold and Ruth is impossible, not because the Divorce Court would either "crush or soil" the woman, but because no divorce law in the world would enable them to extract happiness from the misery of the other two—Helen and George—who

* See *Theatrical World* of 1894, p. 41.

had loved and trusted them. It is true that law, and the habits of thought which it at once expresses and engenders, are not without their influence in the matter. The misery of the deserted ones would very likely be in some measure factitious, the ingrained habit of idealising marriage having made any breakdown of the arrangement seem quite disproportionately painful and terrible. These agonies of convention, these pains which it is our duty to feel, are almost as torturing as the more instinctive and fundamental agonies of unrequited passion; and the play is not without its practical bearing in so far as it suggests such changes in written and unwritten law as would tend to minimise the unnecessary and unreal pains of emotional readjustments. But until human nature has so altered that the word "love" has lost both its beauties and its terrors, there will always remain an irreducible element of quite real and necessary suffering in such a situation as that which Mr. Grundy presents. These people are not essentially "slaves of the ring"; they are slaves of their own and each other's passions. The ring adds little to their discomforts. The situation is essentially the same in the first act, before the ring is put on. What keeps Harold and Ruth apart in the last act is not the law of marriage, but the same shrinking from happiness founded on the misery of others which kept them apart in the first act, before they had come

under the dominion of the marriage-law. They not only shrink from it, they regard it as impossible. In the first act, there was still some hope that they might find peace in sacrificing themselves to the happiness of the other two; in the last act the mischief is done, the happiness of Helen and George Delamere is effectually ruined, and yet they find it less impossible to continue the now futile sacrifice than to attempt the building of their own happiness out of the ruins they have involuntarily created. "Yes," says Mr. Grundy, "they bow their heads under the social yoke, and remain slaves of the ring." But he surely does not imagine that the ring would keep them apart if their own heart and conscience did not raise an impassable barrier between them. That seems to me to be the only justification for the end, which is, however, so disconcertingly abrupt that one is really not quite sure what Mr. Grundy intended to convey.

The construction of the first two acts, though old-fashioned in its complexity, seems to me altogether admirable. A very austere technique would shun the parallelism of the first act—Harold failing to break from his bondage because Helen clings to him so tenderly, Ruth held to her word by the very fact that George Delamere offers to set her free. There is doubtless an air of artificiality in this; but it really belongs to the situation, and for my part I cannot

help taking pleasure in such a piece of delicate and skilful constructive counterpoint. The second act is probably the most original and powerful piece of writing Mr. Grundy has ever done. It rises to the very summit of the drama of situation, of emotion in the abstract, as distinct from the drama of character. From the entrance of Captain Douglas onwards, it simply bristles with dramatic moments, and there is a touch of really poetic imagination in the scene of Ruth's delirium. Had this scene been adequately acted by Miss Calhoun and Mr. Gilbert Hare, it would have converted a success of esteem into a great and memorable triumph. Miss Calhoun was deficient in passion, in pathos, and especially in the sense of mystery upon which the whole effect of the passage depends. The last act did not strike me as happily conceived, but I don't know that I can lay my finger on any very tangible error. The scene—Delamere's conservatory—is surely ill chosen, and Helen's leap through the hedge is more daring than effective.

It would be unkind to speak of Mr. Gilbert Hare's performance. He has shown some promise as a character-actor, but neither his physique nor his talent fits him to step into Mr. Forbes Robertson's shoes. Miss Calhoun acted agreeably enough in the opening and closing scenes, but in the second act she missed her great opportunity. Miss Kate Rorke

did not seem to me at all at her best. In some of the crucial passages of the play I could not but think her stagey and unreal. Mr. Bouchier's part offered him small opportunities, but he handled it rather heavily; and Mr. Brandon Thomas, despite his unflinching sincerity, did not succeed in making a very credible personage of Captain Douglas. Mr. Hare was delightful as the cynical old Earl, and Miss Kate Phillips made the most of the designing widow—a part in which the date of the play was written very large. By-the-bye, the little glimpse we are given into the tragedy of Lord Ravenscroft's life struck me as the best thing in the third act;—but it passed almost unnoticed.

II.

“THYRZA FLEMING.”

9th January.

MISS DOROTHY LEIGHTON'S play, *Thyrza Fleming*,* produced by the renovated Independent Theatre Society at Terry's Theatre, is marked by inexperience, but not at all by incompetence. The first act is a comedietta in itself, a spirited, natural, and entertaining duologue. As the action proceeds, Miss Leighton

* January 4—January 10.

strays from the path which she seems to have proposed to herself. The play being obviously designed as a counterblast to *The Heavenly Twins* and other neo-puritanic denunciations of the Eternal Masculine, the romantic fable of the long-lost mother is a mere irrelevance and embarrassment. The theme is treated with such extreme delicacy that I am really quite uncertain whether Thyrza Fleming has or has not been the mistress of Colonel Rivers. If she has not, the case is flatly irrelevant, and does not touch the question of pre-nuptial morality at all. If she has—and I think we are forced to assume that she has, in spite of a half-hearted and probably hair-splitting denial on her part—then the question of pre-nuptial morality is complicated by a quite unnecessary, improbable, and painful conjuncture of circumstances. Playwrights of far greater experience than Miss Dorothy Leighton have been equally blind to the artistic necessity of stating a case in its simplest terms, if you want to state it at all. It is clear that what was primarily in Miss Leighton's mind was the general question of the man who has lived "a man's life" before marriage, not the very rare and extremely disagreeable case of the man who has lived a man's life with the mother of his bride. In pitching upon this particular complication, Miss Leighton utterly overshoots her mark; while, on the other hand, if the relations between Colonel Rivers and Thyrza

were platonic, she no less clearly undershoots her mark, or rather fails to discharge her bolt at all. Miss Winifred Frazer played Pamela quite admirably, Mr. Bernard Gould was good as Rivers, and Miss Esther Palliser showed some ability in the part of Thyrsa, but was hampered by nervousness and inexperience. Miss Agnes Hill, I observe, has been accused of burlesquing Theophila Falkland. I don't see what else she could have done with the speeches assigned her.

III.

"AN IDEAL HUSBAND."

Pall Mall Budget, 10th January.

MR. OSCAR WILDE might have given a second title to his highly entertaining play at the Haymarket,* which we all enjoyed very nearly as much as he himself did. He might have called it *An Ideal Husband*; or, *The Chiltern Thousands*. There were eighty-six of them—£86,000 was the price paid to Sir Robert Chiltern, then private secretary to a Cabinet Minister, for betraying to an Austrian financier the intention of the Government to pur-

* January 3—April 6. Transferred to Criterion, April 11—April 27.

chase the Suez Canal Shares. The thousands have increased and multiplied; he is wealthy, he is respected, he is Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, he is married to a wife who idolises and idealises him; and, not having stolen anything more in the interim, he is inclined to agree with his wife and the world in regarding himself as the Bayard of Downing Street. The question which Mr. Wilde propounds is, "Ought his old peccadillo to incapacitate him for public life?"—and, while essaying to answer it in the negative, he virtually, to my thinking, answers it in the affirmative. On the principle involved, I have no very strong feeling. It is a black business enough; no divorce-court scandal could possibly be so damning; but one is quite willing to believe it possible that a sudden yielding to overwhelming temptation may occur once in a lifetime, and may even steel the wrong-doer against all future temptation and render him a stronger man than he would otherwise have been. This, I repeat, is possible; but unfortunately the first thing Mr. Wilde does is to show that Sir Robert Chiltern is not a case in point.

Enter Mrs. Cheveley from Vienna, tawny-haired, red-cheeked, white-shouldered. She has in her pocket the letter in which Sir Robert let the Suez cat out of the bag; and, if he will not support in Parliament an Argentine Canal, which he knows to be a gigantic swindle, she will send the letter

to the papers and ruin his political career. Here, then, is an excellent opportunity for Sir Robert to show his mettle. If his honour rooted in dishonour stands, if the boy's weakness has fortified the man's probity, he will of course send Mrs. Cheveley to the right-about and prepare to face the music. It will then be for the dramatist's ingenuity to devise some means of averting the exposure, which Sir Robert deserves to escape, for the very reason that he is man enough to brave it rather than commit a second and greater treachery. Alas! this is not at all Mr. Wilde's view of the matter. Sir Robert Chiltern does not send Mrs. Cheveley to the right-about. On the contrary, he licks the dust before her, and is quite prepared to involve his country in a second Panama catastrophe in order to save his own precious skin. This is giving away the whole case. It may be a mistake to hold a man disabled by his past from doing service to the State; but this man is disabled by his present. The excellent Sir Robert proves himself one of those gentlemen who can be honest so long as it is absolutely convenient, and no longer; and on the whole, in spite of Mr. Wilde's argument, I am inclined to think it a wise instinct which leads us (so far as possible) to select for our Cabinet Ministers men of less provisional probity.

And Sir Robert Chiltern is as irresolute in ill-doing

as in well-doing. Unfortunately for Mrs. Cheveley and her Argentine accomplices, he has told his wife all he knows about the canal scheme; and when she learns that he is going to chop round and support the scheme in Parliament, she cannot believe her ears. "This woman must have some hold over you," she says. "Oh, dear, no!" replies Bayard; "how can you think such a thing? I just thought I'd like to oblige her." Lady Bayard naturally thinks that this is carrying chivalry a little too far, and insists that he shall sit down and write a note crying off his promise. With the utmost docility he does so, but still conceals from his wife the reason of his original compliance, preferring apparently that she shall learn it from Mrs. Cheveley, as she duly does. Then Bayard loses his temper and rates his wife roundly for her stupidity in not knowing all along that he was a scoundrel, and acting up to her position as a scoundrel's helpmeet. The happy pair are now at a deadlock, and the action accordingly passes out of their hands and into those of Lord Goring, a young aristocrat who combines a pretty wit with the subtle policy of Hawkshaw the Detective. While exuding epigrams at every pore, he manages to slip, not the bracelets, but a tell-tale bracelet, upon the adventuress's wrist, and to send her back baffled to Vienna. Then he looks in at Park Lane and talks like a father to Lady Chiltern, convincing her

that to have betrayed your trust once, and to have been with difficulty dissuaded from doing so a second time, is not at all an undesirable record for a Cabinet Minister. And the curtain descends upon this comfortable moral.

Upon my honour (if the creator of Sir Robert Chiltern will forgive the Pharisaism), I had not the slightest intention when I sat down of picking the play to pieces in this way. I don't know what possessed me. *An Ideal Husband* is a very able and entertaining piece of work, charmingly written, wherever Mr. Wilde can find it in his heart to sufflamine his wit. There are several scenes in which the dialogue is heavily overburdened with witticisms, not always of the best alloy. For Mr. Wilde's good things I have the keenest relish, but I wish he would imitate Beau Brummel in throwing aside his "failures," not exposing them to the public gaze. His peculiar twist of thought sometimes produces very quaint and pleasing results. To object to it as a mere trick would be quite unreasonable. Every writer of any individuality has, so to speak, his trademark; but there are times when the output of Mr. Wilde's epigram-factory threatens to become all trademark and no substance. *An Ideal Husband*, however, does not positively lack good things, but simply suffers from a disproportionate profusion of inferior chatter. In each of Mr. Wilde's plays there has been

one really profound saying, which serves to mark it in my memory. In *Lady Windermere's Fan* it was: "There are only two tragedies in life: not getting what you want—and getting it." In *A Woman of no Importance* it was: "Thought is in its essence destructive; nothing survives being thought of." In this play it is: "Vulgarity is the behaviour of other people." Simple as it seems, there is in this a world of observation and instruction.

The acting was sufficient without being distinguished. Mr. Lewis Waller, as Sir Robert Chiltern, was quite equal to his opportunities, which were not really so great as they might at first sight appear; and Miss Neilson, in her stately fashion, made Lady Chiltern a rather trying mistress to live up to. The good and bad fairy of the Christmas piece were impersonated by Mr. Charles Hawtrey and Miss Florence West respectively. Mr. Hawtrey's Lord Goring will be altogether delightful when he is quite firm in his words and takes his part a little quicker. Miss West played Mrs. Cheveley in a straightforward and somewhat obvious, but not ineffective, fashion. Miss Maud Millet was invaluable in a character cut to her measure; and Mr. Alfred Bishop, Mr. Brookfield, and Miss Fanny Brough were all excellent.

IV.

"KING ARTHUR"—"GUY DOMVILLE."

16th January.

A SPLENDID pageant and a well-built folk-play (for why should we leave to the Germans such a convenient word as *Volksstück*?)—these are the ingredients of the dish served up at the Lyceum on Saturday night, and hugely relished by the audience. *King Arthur** is a genuine success, of that there is no doubt; and it deserves its fortune. In producing such a work, Mr. Irving is putting his opportunities and resources to a worthy use. In the historic or legendary pageant-play he seems to have found the formula best suited to the present stage of his career. On this path, at any rate, he marches from success to success—from *Henry VIII.* to *Becket*, from *Becket* to *King Arthur*. Mr. Comyns Carr, it is true, is neither Shakespeare-Fletcher nor Tennyson. We miss not only the distinction of style, but the large dramatic movement which even Tennyson succeeded in imparting to one or two of his scenes. On the other hand, Mr. Carr writes very creditable blank verse, correct and by no means lacking in

* *King Arthur* ran from January 12 to May 3, and was afterwards played at many matinées, and at three additional evening performances, before the close of the season.

dignified sonority; and he knows how to put a play together much better than Tennyson ever did, or than Shakespeare cared to in *Henry VIII.* There are some very pretty ingenuities of compression in his treatment of his somewhat unwieldy theme. Perhaps, when a new pageant-play is wanted, Mr. Carr might collaborate with one of the young poets who are burgeoning around us like flowers in spring; and thus might the reign of Mr. Irving be at last immortalised by a substantial enrichment of English literature.

Mr. Carr is reputed to have gone back to Malory for his inspiration, not daring, or perhaps not deigning, to tread in the footsteps of Tennyson. That he went to Malory I don't doubt; that he brought very much away from Malory I cannot discover. Where he departs from Tennyson, it is not, or very seldom, to follow Malory; and the characters of Arthur, Guinevere, and Lancelot are much more Tennysonian than Malorian. It asks some courage, but I am moved to take my critical life in my hand and say a word for *The Idylls of the King* in their relation to the *Morte d'Arthur*. That Tennyson refined away the racy mediævalism of Malory's compilation, that he carved a set of highly polished modern romances out of the rough mass of the primitive epic—so much is patent to every one. It may even be admitted that the *Idylls* bear too

many traces of those upper-middle-class, squirearchical ideals which informed so much of his work. The moral atmosphere of the poem is a trifle stuffy. But how rare and exquisite its physical atmosphere, its plastic and picturesque aspects! Its landscape alone is a possession for ever to the imagination of our race; and it is full of essential poetry, of things said as nobly and beautifully as it is possible to say them. Why should we quarrel with the work of a great poet because he was not at the same time a pioneer spirit and a master dramatist? Apply to the *Paradise Lost* the methods of criticism currently applied to the *Idylls*, and it would cut a sorry figure. But why do I use the conditional mood? The thing has been done, with memorable effect, by the late Monsieur Taine. My present purpose, however, is chiefly to protest against the idea that, in his *Blameless King*, Tennyson has been guilty of a sad injustice to the magnificent Arthur of Malory. Tennyson's Arthur is, no doubt, a bit of a prig, as any mystic and semi-allegoric personage is apt to be. He does not wear his blamelessness with a very easy grace, and manages now and then to rub our unregenerate human nature the wrong way. But if he is a prig, he is at least an eminently well-meaning one; whereas Malory's Arthur is a prig and a hound to boot. He had the advantage, of course, of not being blameless. He had quite a little brood of

children (and among them Mordred) or ever he met Guinevere; but, after all, there is no great merit in that. The drowning of all the children born on May-day was not precisely an amiable circumstance: one prefers even Tennysonian blamelessness to such out-Heroding Herod. But it is precisely in his relation to Guinevere and Lancelot that Malory's Arthur comes out in the most questionable light. In the first place, he is very much annoyed when Sir Agravaire and Sir Mordred (answering in the affirmative Labiche's query, *Doit-on le dire?*) insist on telling him the Court scandal. "The King was full loth thereto, that any noise should be upon Launcelot and his queen; for the King had a deeming, but he would not hear of it." Then, when the thing is no longer to be hushed up, this excellent monarch stoops to the familiar device of a pretended absence for "taking them with the deed." He has no sort of belief in the trial by battle which he has been countenancing all his life. "Lancelot," he says, in effect, "must be caught in the act; for if you leave him a chance to appeal to the wager of arms, he'll knock you all into a cocked hat, and where shall we be then?" Lancelot, having fallen into the trap, cuts his way out of it; and Guinevere, without any form of trial, is to be burnt at the stake, though even Sir Gawaine says to the outraged husband, "Wit you well, I will never be in that place

where so noble a Queen as is my lady dame Guenever shall take a shameful end." Lancelot rescues her, and in so doing kills Gareth, Gaheris, and many others of his old comrades; whereupon Arthur remarks, "Much more I am sorrier for my good knights' loss than for the loss of my fair Queen; for queens I might have enow, but such a fellowship of good knights shall never be together in no company." No doubt there is reason and candour in this; but dignity is somewhat lacking. No! it is Lancelot who plays the fine part in Malory; or rather, one may say, Lancelot is the real character, the poetically conceived and projected figure, of the whole. His quiet, resolute, indomitable devotion, his melancholy courtesy and inexhaustible magnanimity, are infinitely and quite immorally touching. When it comes to open war between the King and his knight, Lancelot is untiring in his chivalric forbearance, while Arthur allows Gawaine to challenge him to single combat, well knowing that Gawaine is not going to fight fair, but is protected by sorcery. Tennyson could not possibly have reproduced the base, barbarian Arthur of Malory, who, after winking at his wife's intrigue, is bent upon burning her when he can wink no longer. Even the much-denounced allocution at Almesbury was less inhuman than that. And Mr. Carr was bound to follow Tennyson's lead in somewhat redressing the balance between Arthur and

Lancelot. I cannot find that his Arthur is much more human than Tennyson's, but at least he is free from the smug egoism that defaces some of the Tennysonian speeches. Mr. Carr's Arthur does not say:

"I am thine husband—not a smaller soul,
Not Lancelot, nor another."

He does not twit her with her childlessness:

"The children born of thee are sword and fire,
Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws."

And yet, as I write the words, there comes over me a quite indefensible wish that he *had* said anything half as magnificent, in however execrable taste, instead of mildly reflecting that

"There is no might can give back to the spring
Its lowliest flower dead under changing skies;
Then how should I, with winter at my heart,
Plead with the ruined summer for its rose?"

This is a highly respectable and harmless sentiment; no gentleman, under the painful circumstances, could possibly express himself with greater propriety; but somehow I feel as if even the tactless outpourings of Tennyson's Arthur had a little more blood and nerve in them. They are a sort of middle term between Mr. Carr's delicacy of sentiment and the crude

realism of Malory's "Queens I might have enow, but such a fellowship of good knights shall never be together in no company."

The first and third acts of Mr. Carr's play (mind, when I say the first act, I don't mean the Prologue) are quite admirably constructed. The way in which the living Elaine reveals Lancelot's passion to the Queen, while the dead Elaine reveals it to the King, is not only ingenious, but beautiful; and the process of emotion in both acts is excellently dramatic. The best-written passage in the play, to my thinking, is the declaration between Lancelot and Guinevere. If Miss Ellen Terry had been a tragic and passionate instead of an idyllic and fascinating actress, this would have been a really thrilling dramatic moment. Much less excellent are the second and fourth acts. In the second, one cannot help wondering why Lancelot and Guinevere should select the occasion of a picnic, when the woods are known to be full of merrymakers, for such compromising endearments. In the fourth, the drama is practically over, and has only to be wound up in formal and spectacular fashion.

The spectacle is gorgeous throughout; but the supernatural element, the diablerie, if I may put it so (with apologies to Merlin), is, from first to last, inferior. In all other departments of scenic decoration Mr. Irving is a pioneer; in his dealings with the

supernatural he is, if not behind the age, at any rate barely abreast of it. He relies entirely upon his scenic artists for his sorceries, and they, though masters in their own department, are the veriest tyros in necromancy. Mr. Irving ought to call in a specialist for his illusions, no less than for his costumes—an artist, and at the same time a man of mechanical and inventive genius—Professor Herkomer, for example. A resolute adherence to antiquated methods of diablerie did much to mar the effect of *Faust*; in *King Arthur* it is still more deplorable, though fortunately it does not enter into any of the essential scenes of the drama. The Prologue it utterly ruins. Anything more feebly undeceptive and ludicrously unpoetical than this whole scene it would be hard to conceive. It presents, as you probably know, the finding, or taking, or achieving, of the brand Excalibur, an incident familiar to the imagination of every one. How much better to have left it entirely to the imagination, if this was all that could be done to realise it!*

In the first place, the Magic Mere becomes a dismal chasm in a cliff-bound coast, so narrow that Arthur could not have taken a header into it without danger of dashing out his brains against the rocks on the opposite side. In the background, but at the

* This paragraph, and the three following, appeared in the *Pall Mall Budget*, January 24.

distance of only a few yards, a dim arch, like a bridge, traverses the whole scene. To this moment I am unable even to conjecture what it represents—whether a natural arch in the rock, or a stationary mist-wreath, or nothing at all. Whatever it may be, it is very stiff and ugly. Above it hang mathematically horizontal “sky-borders,” apparently representing a flat layer of fog in the upper air. But again this is a mere guess; whatever they represent, they resemble nothing but sky-borders. The water is simulated by the old device of strips of gauze stretched across the stage—a transparent convention. Over the edge of the gauze a hand (not an arm) awkwardly protrudes the sword for a few moments and then withdraws it again(!), while Merlin amuses Arthur with a vision of Guinevere, seen under the aforementioned arch, against a crudely-painted background of may-blossom. This over, the Spirit of the Lake rises stiffly from behind the gauze and speaks her piece, while Excalibur once more bobs up like a dog at her heels. When she has disappeared, Excalibur somehow shambles a yard or two nearer the point of rock where Arthur is standing, and he secures it at some risk of toppling into the pool. Is it possible Mr. Irving does not realise how the narrowness of the pool, the popping up and down of the sword, and its unspeakably ludicrous position beside and yet apart from the Spirit of the Lake (as

though she disdained to deliver her parcels in person) —how all this ruins the poetry of the incident and reduces it to mechanical and childish make-believe? The whole staging of the Prologue is unimaginative, uninventive, unbeautiful. It may be (though I don't believe it) that the resources of stage-illusion go no further. In that case it is a thousand pities they should ever have gone so far.

No less ineffectual is the vision of the Grail in the first act. It is an error of art to begin with (like the disappearance and reappearance of Excalibur), and it is badly executed to boot. These marvels lose all their marvellousness when they occur and recur at a given hour of the afternoon. To top off Sir Kay's description of the great miracle with a private repetition of it for Sir Lancelot's special benefit is to perpetrate an obvious piece of bathos. The only excuse for it would be that the actual miracle should surpass its description; whereas, in fact, it falls ludicrously short of it. To the eye of faith, the apparition may be an angel bearing the Holy Grail; to the natural eye, it rather suggests a waiting-maid of the period walking along a corridor with a vol-au-vent swathed in a napkin. The stage-direction says that "a red light strikes like a star through the transparent veil that covers the cup;" but I saw nothing of the sort. An artist-machinist might surely have found inspiration in that verse of Tennyson's:—

“ A gentle sound, an awful light !
Three angels bear the Holy Grail :
*With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.”*

Or, if it come not within the powers of the modern stage to realise such a picture, it might at least dissemble its impotence by leaving the thing unattempted. Similarly, Tennyson has drawn for all time the picture of the Passing of Arthur; and if scenic ingenuity cannot (as it certainly does not at the Lyceum) come anywhere near the presentation of

“ The level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon,”

Arthur would much better be suffered to pass unseen to the Unseen. But I cannot persuade myself that it is impossible to devise a worthier illusion than that clumsy barge hopelessly aground in a grey-green fog.

I dwell on this matter of the supernatural effects, neither exaggerating nor extenuating their deficiencies, because I have perfect faith in Mr. Irving's liberality, enthusiasm, and desire to do the very best with the means at his command. He does not realise, I am sure, how lame and unimpressive is the supernatural side of this great production; and as soon as he begins to think about it, he will see his way, on future occasions, to more novel and beautiful effects. Thought is really all that is required; and though

Mr. Irving, of course, cannot be his own machinist any more than his own costumier, there must be plenty of people able and willing to devise and carry out improvements, the moment Mr. Irving's imagination has become fully possessed of the desire for them. He surely cannot doubt the possibility of improvement, when he reflects on the enormous advance that has been made under his management in everything else, while the mechanism of the supernatural has alone remained stationary. How the late Mr. Bateman would have stared at the costumes, the scenery, and the general appointments of *King Arthur*!—but the visions and portents would have struck him as quite in their accustomed order. Pictorial illusion is not the highest aim of theatrical art, but it is at all events better worth achieving than pictorial disillusion.

The character of Arthur will undoubtedly be reckoned among Mr. Irving's finer achievements. He embodies it with incomparable nobility and refinement, and speaks his verses with perfect distinction and purity of accent. Mr. Comyns Carr's blank verse is Tennysonian in its movement, and therefore suits Mr. Irving's methods much better than a more impetuous and dramatic prosody, which calls for a corresponding impetus of delivery. Miss Ellen Terry is an ideal Guinevere to the eye; it is impossible to conceive a statelier or more gracious

figure; and her performance is altogether charming. Mr. Forbes Robertson is an etherealised Lancelot. His figure is absolutely beautiful; but it suggests an "affable archangel" of Carpaccio's or Benozzo Gozzoli's rather than a knight of the Round Table; or if indeed a knight, then the stainless Galahad rather than the superbly human Lancelot of the Lake. His acting, let me hasten to add, is perfect in its kind. Miss Geneviève Ward and Mr. Frank Cooper do nothing to soften the villainy of Morgan le Fay and Mordred, and Miss Lena Ashwell makes a simple and pleasant Elaine. A beardless Merlin seems almost a contradiction in terms. It was thought, no doubt, that a beard might bring with it reminiscences of Santa Claus in Mr. Oscar Barrett's pantomime; but there might surely have been a middle course between Father Christmas and the First Witch in *Macbeth*. Mr. Valentine, in any case, spoke his lines sonorously and well. As for the armour and costumes designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, one may report, safely and briefly, that nothing more beautiful has ever been seen on any stage.

Since *Beau Austin*, we have seen nothing on the English stage so charming as the first act of *Guy Domville*.* The motives are delicately interwoven, yet remain clear and convincing; the scenes are

* St. James's, January 5—February 5.

ordered with a master hand; and the writing is graceful without mannerism. It seemed to me that Mr. James made one slight mistake, or rather missed one opportunity. Mrs. Peverel has told Frank Humber that the signet-ring is designed as a parting gift for a friend, meaning Guy Domville. Then she comes to think that it is from Humber, not Domville, that she must part; what a pretty and dramatic touch it would be if she were to give the ring to Humber, by way of announcing, in delicate symbolism, her rejection of his suit! As a matter of fact, she does give the ring to Humber; but the significance of the gift seems to occur to her only as an afterthought, and the ingenuity and beauty of the effect is lost. This is a very small matter—so minute, indeed, that I may have been misled as to Mr. James's intention by some momentary slip on Miss Marion Terry's part. Otherwise, the act was a gem without a flaw. In the second act Mr. James appeared to pass from comedy of sentiment to comedy of intrigue. There was no further development of Domville's character, and even the immediate motives which governed him ceased to be very clear. The drinking-scene, too, seemed to be a concession to some supposed demand for lively and even violent action, rather than a natural outgrowth of the situation. One did not even see why the young sailor should assume as a matter of course that he

could carry more liquor than Domville, on whom he had never set eyes until that moment. The third act returned to the key of sentiment, but pitched it too high. To this day I am quite in the dark as to why Lord Devenish's gloves on Mrs. Peverel's table should produce such a momentous revolution in Domville's frame of mind. He has not the slightest shadow of reason for suspecting that she is in league with his lordship to entrap him into marriage, and apparently he does not suspect anything of the sort. The mere remembrance of Lord Devenish seems to throw him into a sudden and motiveless frenzy, in which he sacrifices his own happiness and that of Mrs. Peverel to a chance recollection of his not very effectual call to the priesthood. Of course, I misunderstand his motives; of course, he "has grounds more relative than this": but the fact remains that Mr. James has failed to make his hero's conduct comprehensible to a very attentive and, I hope he will believe, a very sympathetic listener. The staging of the play was perfect in every respect, and the acting was, on the whole, admirable. Mr. Alexander, Mr. Waring, and Mr. Esmond were all excellent; only Mr. Elliot, as Lord Devenish, did not seem quite to catch the tone either of the period or of the particular play. Miss Marion Terry was charming as Mrs. Peverel; Miss Millard did all that was possible with the part of Mary Brasier; and Miss Irene

Vanbrugh, as Fanny, played her little scene in the third act very cleverly.

V.

"AN INNOCENT ABROAD"—"HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS"—"A PAIR OF SPECTACLES."

23rd January.

IT is rather sad to see the theatre* to which, in our memories, there still clings a faint aroma of *Sweet Lavender*, given over to such work as *An Innocent Abroad*, and the actor who created Dick Phenyl wasting his quaintness on the Tobias Pilkingtons of fifth-rate farce. Mr. W. Stokes Craven's play, however, will probably serve its turn. It is an errant-husband buffoonery of the most conventional type; but it does not stand on the lowest level of workmanship, and there are some really diverting situations in the last act. This act Mr. Terry has all to himself, but in the earlier scenes it is Mr. Ernest Hendrie, rather than Mr. Terry, that holds the play together by the grim humour of his impersonation of a prize-fighter.

As an afterpiece to *An Innocent Abroad*, Mr. Terry

* Terry's. *An Innocent Abroad* and *High Life Below Stairs* ran from January 14 to March 16.

produced "the Musical Farce in one act, entitled *High Life Below Stairs*, by the Rev. James Townley." Poor Mr. Townley! He got no credit for his work while he lived, for the piece was generally attributed to Garrick; and now that he is dead he comes in for all the discredit of an outrageous mutilation and stultification of a really humorous and pleasant satire. Mr. Terry omits a good half of the dialogue (the original play is in two acts), introduces, if I am not mistaken, one or two reminiscences from Sam Weller's celebrated "swarry" at Bath, and, for the rest, gives his whole mind to frigid, grotesque, and often wholly incomprehensible malapropisms and meaningless perversions of words. How far tradition may be responsible for this bedevilment of the text I do not know; but, tradition or no tradition, it is foolish and unworthy. I am far from regarding *High Life Below Stairs* as a classic into which it would be sacrilege to introduce a single "gag"; but in this case the gagging is reckless and childish. The little caricature-comedy—for it scarcely deserves to rank as a mere farce—would well repay careful and artistic revival. It is, indeed, an ingeniously double-barrelled satire. Professing to display the corruption of the servants' hall, it in reality satirises the affectations of the coffee-house and the boudoir. "What an impertinent piece of assurance it is in these fellows," says Freeman, "to affect and imitate their masters' manners!" Whereupon

Lovel very justly replies, "What manners must those be which they can imitate?" The piece was originally played (in 1759) by Palmer and King, Mrs. Clive and Mrs. Abington. Mr. Terry and his comrades reduce it to the level of a music-hall "sketch."

That charming fairy-tale *A Pair of Spectacles**—the condensed milk of human kindness—has been revived at the Garrick, and, with Mr. Hare, Mr. Groves, and Miss Kate Rorke in their original parts, goes as merrily as ever. Mr. Gilbert Hare cleverly replaces Mr. Sydney Brough as Dick, Mr. Allan Aynesworth is good as Percy, and Miss Mabel Terry Lewis made a pleasant and promising first appearance in the part of Lucy Lorimer.

VI.

"ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL."

Pall Mall Budget, 31st January.

A PERFORMANCE of the Irving Amateur Dramatic Club at St. George's Hall† last week gave me an opportunity of seeing a play as yet unknown to me on the stage—*All's Well that Ends Well*. I never miss a chance of "bagging" a new Shakespeare, and adding its scalp, or, in plain language, its play-

* January 17—March 9.

† January 22 and 24.

bill, to my collection. As I enjoy the proud privilege of being an Englishman (*à peu près*), and not a German, I shall certainly go to my grave without having seen anything like the full cycle of his playable plays. My ambition stops short of *Troilus and Cressida*, which was not intended for the stage, and of *Titus Andronicus*, which is absurd; but now that *All's Well* is bagged, there still remain *The Tempest*, *Coriolanus*, *Timon of Athens*, *Richard II.*, the second part of *Henry IV.*, the whole of *Henry VI.* (which, after all, is part of our great historical epos, and is so treated in Germany), the *Comedy of Errors*, and the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*,* unacted in my time. Several of the others I have seen only once, presented by amateurs—*Love's Labour's Lost*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Henry IV.*, Part I. Mr. Beerbohm Tree once played *King John*, at the Crystal Palace, several years ago; *Cymbeline* I have seen only in the provinces; and *Julius Cæsar*, perhaps the most magnificent acting play ever written, has been performed in London, and admirably performed, within the memory of man—but by a German company.

Far be it from me to maintain that all or any of these plays ought to be constantly represented; but is it utterly chimerical to dream of a theatre at which

* These two comedies have since been produced, the one by amateurs (see Art. LII.), the other by Mr. Daly (see Art. XXXIV.).

no year should pass without a revival for a few nights of one or two of the less-known Shakespearian plays, so that the whole repertory should be passed in review once in ten years or so? The Germans possess such theatres; we poverty-stricken islanders cannot afford one. But I perceive I am trenching on the inflammatory topic of the Municipal or Endowed Theatre, which causes angry passions to rise in many otherwise equanimous bosoms. I sheer off hastily with the confession that *All's Well that Ends Well*, which forms the text of my discourse, is not in itself a very great loss to the theatre. *Julius Cæsar*, *Coriolanus*, *Cymbeline*, and the two parts of *Henry IV.* are plays which could really be made to live for a modern audience—not so *All's Well*. Hazlitt calls it "one of the most pleasing of our author's comedies," but I think a "dis" has dropped out before "pleasing." Despite its extraordinary inequalities of style, indeed, it is pleasant enough reading, though I don't know but that I would rather read Boccaccio's story in his own words. In any case, a story may be delightful in "the golden pages of Boccaccio," and very much the reverse when expanded and realised on the stage.

In a romance, a fairy-tale (and practically this is nothing else), we have a right to look for some resting-place for our sympathies; where are we to find it here? In plain latter-day English, Bertram

is a snob, Helena an adventuress. I turn to one of the latest German commentators, Dr. Louis Lewes, author of *The Women of Shakespeare*, and I find that "Helena's love is passionate, spiritual, free from all egotism"! "Her position," Dr. Lewes proceeds, "is not only unhappy, it offends our taste, and yet her character rises in inward sincerity, touching nobility, and beauty, above the unworthiness of her condition." Character, in other words, is independent of conduct, and love which has recourse to tyranny and perfidy in order to gain its ends shall be held "free from all egotism" if only the young lady expresses herself nobly and poetically. If Bertram had promised Helena marriage, even if he had betrayed and deserted her, one must still have questioned her taste and dignity in carrying her breach of promise suit to the King's Bench in such a spirit of intrigue and chicanery. But there is no suggestion that Bertram ever breathed a word of love to Helena. She simply made up her sincere and noble mind to marry him willy-nilly, and she carried her point by methods which, if used by a man towards a woman, would brand him as a villain of the deepest dye, and earn him the execrations of every gallery in Christendom. The thing is a fairy-tale, and as a fairy-tale it pleases the imagination, on its sensual rather than its spiritual side. On the plane of real life, Shakespeareolatry alone can find the fable edifying or

attractive. The text had been so carefully bowdlerised for the Irving Club that the story would scarcely have been comprehensible to any one who did not know it beforehand. Miss Olive Kennett played Helena with dignity and intelligence, Mrs. Herbert Morris made a charming Diana, and Miss Lena Heinekey a good Countess of Rousillon. The male performers were passable, but undistinguished.

VII.

"AN ARTIST'S MODEL."

6th February.

WHEN you have in one company Miss Marie Tempest, *and* Miss Letty Lind, *and* Miss Lottie Venne (the "and" in the modern playbill is equivalent to the star type of bygone days), to say nothing of Mr. Hayden Coffin, Mr. Eric Lewis, Mr. W. Blakeley, and a host of other melodious and comical and generally "clever" people, it really matters very little what you give them to do. That seems to have been the principle which inspired Mr. George Edwardes in providing a successor to *A Gaiety Girl*, and I am far from saying that he was mistaken. Given these "clever people," with gay costumes and sparkling music, and the piece will practically make itself in

the course of a few nights. Or, no, I am wrong—the piece will disappear, and the entertainment will make itself. Somewhere near the beginning of *The Ring and the Book* (the exact reference I cannot give, but I have good reason for believing that it must be near the beginning) Browning tells us how goldsmiths will sometimes mix their metal with alloy, to make it workable, eliminating the alloy by some chemical process when the ring or bracelet has been fashioned. The libretto of *An Artist's Model*,* I take it, serves the purpose of this alloy: it must be practically eliminated before the “comedy” can be said to have reached its definitive state. I only wish the chemical action had set in at the last rehearsals, instead of being left to the first performances. However, in work of this class it's never too late to cut, and the *Artist's Model* of a week hence will, no doubt, be a totally different thing from the *Artist's Model* of Saturday evening. Mr. “Owen Hall,” indeed, seems to have gone to work in a scientific spirit, and determined to achieve a really popular entertainment on the principle of the survival of the fittest. “With the lavishness of Mother Nature herself,” one fancies him saying, “I will send forth all the children of my teeming fantasy. The weaklings will inevitably go to

* Daly's Theatre, February 2. Transferred to Lyric Theatre, May 28—September 6. Reproduced at Daly's (“Second Edition”), September 28—still running.

the wall, and those which emerge from the struggle for existence will prove themselves, by that very fact, the best adapted to their conditions. Why should I trouble to polish and select? I will pour at the feet of the audience all my wealth of invention and wit, and say to them, 'Ladies and gentlemen, you pays your money, and you takes your choice!'" Those of the first-night audience who had paid their money did indeed take their choice with considerable emphasis.

I have a very sincere liking for the class of entertainment to which *An Artist's Model* belongs. As it began with *In Town*, I presume we may assign to Mr. "Adrian Ross" the credit of its invention. These musical farces are certainly an immense improvement on the old-fashioned burlesques and third-rate operettas which they have so largely supplanted. I believe there is a future before this admirably supple and adaptable art-form. Elaborate plot and nicely-jointed structure would obviously be out of place in it; but we need not therefore conclude that it ought to be quite without form and void. That is Mr. "Owen Hall's" mistake. Emptiness and incoherence can never be to the advantage of any dramatic production. It is not that Mr. "Hall" has no story to tell. On the contrary, he has three or four; but they have no discoverable connection with one another, only one of them (the semi-sentimental story

of Adèle and Rudolf Blair) is comprehensible, and that one is mortally tedious. In process of time (and the sooner the better) all attempt to make the plot or plots comprehensible will, no doubt, be abandoned, and the piece will become a series of frankly incoherent musical and farcical scenes. It will then, I fancy, be very attractive, for Mr. Harry Greenbank's verses are bright and ingenious, and Mr. Sidney Jones's music is often very taking. But it would be a great pity, almost a disaster, if the success of so invertebrate a production were to be taken as establishing the principle that a musical farce means a mere stirabout of "turns." As for the so-called audacities of the dialogue, it would be merely playing into the hands of their inventor, or inventors, to make much of them. It is true there are one or two childish silly lines, pieces of gross ill-manners, that make one marvel how adult human beings can think it worth while to devise them, or can be persuaded to speak them on the stage; but it would be absurd to pretend that they do any particular harm. The rumour of them may keep some people away from the production; I cannot imagine that it can possibly bring any one to see it. For instance, a schoolmistress, passing her pupils in review, bids one of them step forward, and says, "This young lady is leaving us; she has to go home; her father and mother are going to be married." Charming, isn't it? So ingenious! So humorous!

Think of the great, daring intellect that conceived it ! Well, if you like that sort of thing, there are one or two other coruscations of the same nature to delight you. The audience, somehow, did not take cordially to them, and they may possibly have flickered out ere now, the meteors of one glorious evening—

"Or like the lightning that doth cease to be
Ere one can say 'It lightens' !"

But invented they were, and spoken they were ; and, as aforesaid, if they pleased Mr. "Owen Hall," I don't see that they hurt any one, unless it were Mr. George Edwardes and his syndicate. In the first act, a girl who has run away from school, dressed as a boy, wanders into a studio where a number of artists are at work. "I believe she's a girl !" whispers one of these gentlemen to his comrades, and then, turning to the pretended boy, he says, "Come, you shall sit to us for the Young Apollo !" "In what way ?" she asks. "Like this !" he replies, holding up a drawing of a nude figure. And thereupon the young gentlemen surround her, and make as though to take off her clothes, until she is driven to confess her sex. Since Mr. Pigott has officially vouched for this scene (and we all know how particular he is), no doubt it is all right ; but one cannot help wondering whether art students are really such unspeakable cads.

Miss Marie Tempest, who plays the title-part, is

the best singer we have heard for years in this class of work. Her song with the refrain "*On y revient toujours*" will probably become popular, and some of the sentimental music allotted to her and Mr. Hayden Coffin is very pretty. Miss Letty Lind is charming as the runaway schoolgirl in the first act, and dances a sort of glorified "cellar-flap" dance which brought the house down. Her song and dance in the second act ("A tom-tit lived in a tip-top tree") are also among the hits of the piece. Miss Lottie Venne is very bright in a not very brilliant part, and Miss Leonora Braham is quite thrown away upon a character in which she has no opportunities either for singing or acting. Mr. Eric Lewis, too, plays a most ineffective part. In fact, the stage is so crowded with "clever people" that they cannot possibly find elbow-room for their cleverness. Mr. Blakeley contrives to be droll in his own peculiar way as a studio attendant, and Mr. Yorke Stephens wanders aimlessly and amiably through the play in the character of an amateur painter. Mr. Maurice Farkoa, Mr. E. M. Robson, and Mr. Lawrence D'Orsay are all good in their way; and the ladies of the chorus are excellent in *their* way—that is, in the way of good-looks.

VIII.

"A LEADER OF MEN."

13th February.

MR. COMYNS CARR has shown public spirit as well as managerial policy in producing *A Leader of Men*,* the maiden effort of a new playwright. The penny-wise economists of stageland will no doubt suggest that I ought to have said "public spirit *rather than* managerial policy"; but I believe that, rightly understood, the two things are coincident. Even from the narrowest box-office point of view, what can be more important to a manager than to keep up a good supply of new plays? He lives by vending plays; if there are no vendible plays to be had, or if the supply is so scanty that he has to scramble with other managers in the struggle to secure them at any cost, his always aleatory calling becomes trebly precarious. But how is the supply of plays to be kept up (now that the export trade from France has almost ceased) unless new playwrights are from time to time discovered and encouraged? Dramatists do not drop ready-made from the skies. However great their diligence and devotion, they cannot even, like poets or painters, master their art within the four walls of their private workshop. It is only on the stage itself, in contact

* Comedy Theatre, February 9—March 8.

first with the actors and then with the audience, that they can learn the ultimate secrets of their mystery. For the opportunity of acquiring this knowledge they are dependent on managers; and if the managers say, "You need not come to us until you are accomplished and recognised playwrights," how are they ever to achieve accomplishment and recognition? Make a law that no one is to enter the water until he can swim, and the art of swimming will very soon be extinct. "But the prentice playwright," you say, "can plash about at his ease in the shallow water of the matinée." Yes, if he has £150 or £200 to spare for each plunge; but he will learn next to nothing from matinée actors and audiences, nor will managers and critics learn anything to the purpose about him and his talent. Take *A Leader of Men*, for example—if it had been produced at a trial matinée, its author would have gained no experience worth the having, and would have been almost as far as ever from getting really into touch with managers, critics, and public. A matinée given by a manager, with the same actors whom he would have employed in an evening production, is of course a somewhat different affair. This enables us to see the play in its true perspective, and any little difference there may be in the composition of the audience can easily be allowed for. If Mr. Comyns Carr had chosen, in the first instance, to put on *A Leader of Men* in the afternoon, he would

certainly have done well ; but he did much better to submit it to the one really decisive test—that of a regular evening production. He mounted it quite adequately, without ostentatious expense ; and without scouring London for a "star combination," he filled every part sufficiently, and some admirably. Whether he will make any profit on this particular venture it is impossible to say. If he does not, I fancy no one will be less surprised than he. But he has given a young man of talent a chance, and thus helped to keep the ball rolling. If Mr. "Charles E. D. Ward" does not profit by the opportunity, the fault is not Mr. Carr's ; and, after all, there is no great harm done. If he does profit by it, and becomes an effective addition to our little group of playwrights, Mr. Carr will not only have rendered the stage a substantial service, but will have secured for himself a first claim upon the maturer work of the new man.

Of course I do not ignore or under-estimate the risks which a manager runs in essaying untried talent, or the temptation he naturally feels to stick to big ventures with playwrights of established fame. The long-run system, with its attendant habit of luxurious mounting, necessarily makes managers chary of facing the loss, of prestige as well as of money, involved in a failure or even in what may be called a semi-success. Therefore I heartily agree with Mr. Bernard Shaw that if the managers were wise they

ought to combine to subsidise some sort of Independent Theatre as a nursery for dramatists, instead of turning a cold shoulder to every enterprise of the kind. But since such corporate spirit and insight into the essential facts of the situation are scarcely to be looked for at present, there is all the more reason to applaud the individual intelligence and liberality of Mr. Comyns Carr.

The chances are about even, I should say, that his insight will be justified in the case of Mr. Ward, if so we must call him. He is clearly an able man; it yet remains to be seen whether Nature has endowed him with the specific faculty of the dramatist. The only portion of that complex faculty which is unmistakably apparent in *A Leader of Men* is the gift of eloquence, of high-pitched rhetoric. The passages where the drama really stirred us were all declamatory; but—this must be recorded to the author's credit—the effect sometimes lay in a really dramatic contrast between the declamation and the answer to it. For instance, when Robert Llewelyn has delivered a long harangue in denunciation of Mrs. Dundas's supposed perfidy, she, having listened in absolute silence, replies, "Every word you say is music to me," or something to that effect, and makes a motion as though to kneel before him. The very depth of his feeling, the very ardour of his resentment, has shown her that she was wrong in suspecting him of insincere

Don Juanism; and the contrast between the intention of his diatribe and the effect it produces is not only pretty but essentially dramatic. The other telling passages in the play were Llewelyn's onslaught on his treacherous henchman, Mr. Stone; Mrs. Dundas's protest against the idea of returning to her husband; Mrs. Ellis's address for the prosecution and Mrs. Dundas's plea for the defence, in the third act; and Farquhar's appeal to Llewelyn not to leave his party in the lurch for the sake of a seemingly faithless woman—all passages of copious, emphatic, balanced oratory, vigorously written, without offensive highfalutin, but all somewhat lacking in the rapid give-and-take which denotes the handiwork of the dramatist as distinguished from the rhetorician. I am very far from denying that impassioned rhetoric is a legitimate weapon in the dramatist's armoury; but he should try to bring his quick-firing guns freely into play, and not keep pounding away all the time with his hundred-tonners. Mr. Ward's formula for a thrilling scene is to let some one take the stage and overwhelm some one else with such a torrent of denunciation or appeal that he can scarcely get a word in edgewise. In lighter, brighter, and subtler passages, his dialogue scarcely gets over the footlights. The exchange of sarcasms between Llewelyn and Mrs. Dundas over the afternoon tea-table is improbable and ineffective; the light love-scenes between Barbara Deane and

Carnforth are conventional and trivial; and a good deal of the wit in what may be called the "connective" passages—to use a physiological metaphor—is not at all scenic in its quality. For example—She: "You Radicals want so many hopeless changes." He: "No, we want to change the laws that make so many hopeless." This is not very brilliant at best, and it is mere waste of time to speak it on the stage. On the other hand, there are a good many really happy sayings, and none that are inept or vulgar.

In all this I may seem to have been trifling round the outskirts of the play, instead of going straight for the essential questions of theme and structure. But in the work of a new writer, theme and structure are not, to my thinking, the essential matters. It would be nothing less than a miracle if he had entirely mastered his theme or put his play together with the deftness of an expert. The real question is, "Does he seem to possess the touch, the fingering, as it has been called, of the dramatist?"—and that reveals itself rather in details, and especially in style, than in the general structure of the play. Coming now to the larger but not more important questions, one can only say that Mr. Ward has touched upon two excellent themes, without taking a very firm grasp of either. Theme No. 1 is the position of a woman legally bound to an unpardonably vicious and brutal husband, when a new love enters into her life. This

is an old, old story, but there is no reason why it should not recur in drama so long as it recurs every day in life. Theme No. 2 is the position of a "leader of men," who is called upon to choose between his duty to his party, to his ideal, and his passion for a woman. This is a much more novel theme, taken, as we all know, direct from life, and full of dramatic possibilities. Behind it lies a third theme, in which there is a great play for the man who has the power to handle it—the question whether, and how far, notorious irregularities of private conduct ought to disable a man from public service. This third theme Mr. Ward never approaches, either in intention or in fact. The second one he misses, because he does not show us that there is any absolute necessity for Llewelyn to choose between his love and his Bill. His determination to retire from public life is gratuitous, or at any rate premature. We are given to understand that the triumph or defeat of his Bill depends upon the question whether or not he goes down to the House to support it on a given evening, and there is nothing in his relation to Mrs. Dundas to prevent his doing so. Later on, no doubt, theme No. 3 might arise, and he might be forced to sacrifice his career to his entanglement. But this particular Bill is all that appears on the record, so to speak; it is in it that we are asked to interest ourselves, and we cannot of our own accord carry forward our

interest to more or less remote contingencies. If he sacrifices this momentous measure because it is uncertain whether he, personally, will be able to reap the fruits of victory, he is a fool and a traitor, and we don't care a straw what becomes of him. All this merely implies that the author's skill has been insufficient to give consistent dramatic form to the idea in his mind. Again, he lets theme No. 1 slip through his fingers at the crucial moment, by killing off the inconvenient husband. He has (to all appearance) claimed our sympathy for the wife's revolt throughout the first two acts; and then, in the last, he makes her abandon her whole position with a cry of horror the moment she hears that this brute of a husband (whom, pray observe, she never really loved) is seriously ill. This may be—nay, it is—eminently feminine; but it is also a trifle feminine on the author's part to solve a problem, fairly and squarely stated, by the help of an intervention of Providence and a nervous revulsion on the part of his heroine. For the rest, there is no real character or analysis in the play. The protagonists are ideal personages, and the rest are shadows. Instead of choosing one or other of his themes and working it out firmly and consistently, the author has jumbled them together and relied for his dramatic interest on a series of misunderstandings and explanations, all brought about by external, mechanical, and generally rather clumsy

means. There is good reason to hope that Mr. Ward can do much better than this. In the meantime, he has, at least, the fundamental faculty for keeping an audience interested and amused.

Miss Marion Terry as Mrs. Dundas was charming throughout, and quite brought the house down in her great scenes. In one little passage she seemed to me rather to miss an opportunity—the very pretty confession to the Archdeacon near the beginning of the second act. Miss Alma Murray played with great tact a part which might easily have been rendered odious; and Miss May Harvey was bright and pleasing in a character which gave her no great opportunities. The author's style offered some, but scarcely a sufficient, excuse for Mr. Fred Terry's outrageously declamatory performance of Llewelyn; and the same defect, in a minor degree, marred Mr. H. B. Irving's Farquhar. Mr. Irving should guard against an unnatural pitch of voice to which he is rather inclined. Mr. Wyes contributed a capital bit of character in Morton Stone, M.P., and Mr. Will Dennis, Mr. Sydney Brough, and Miss Le Thière were all good.

The revival of Mr. Harry Paulton's burlesque, entitled *Babes*,* at the Strand Theatre, is noteworthy only because of the interpolated scene in which Mr. Edouin introduces the Heathen Chinee, who delighted

* February 4—February 9 (?).

us so much in *Blue Beard* at the Globe, I am afraid to think how many years ago. This is really a diverting impersonation. Mr. Edouin might do worse than get some sort of an extravaganza "written round it."

IX.

"THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST"—
"THOROUGH-BRED"—"AN M.P.'S WIFE."

20th February.

THE dramatic critic is not only a philosopher, moralist, æsthetician, and stylist, but also a labourer working for his hire. In this last capacity he cares nothing for the classifications of Aristotle, Polonius, or any other theorist, but instinctively makes a fourfold division of the works which come within his ken. These are his categories: (1) Plays which are good to see. (2) Plays which are good to write about. (3) Plays which are both. (4) Plays which are neither. Class 4 is naturally the largest; Class 3 the smallest; and Classes 1 and 2 balance each other pretty evenly. Mr. Oscar Wilde's new comedy, *The Importance of Being Earnest*,* belongs indubitably to the first class. It is

* February 12—May 8.

delightful to see, it sends wave after wave of laughter curling and foaming round the theatre; but as a text for criticism it is barren and delusive. It is like a mirage-oasis in the desert, grateful and comforting to the weary eye—but when you come close up to it, behold! it is intangible, it eludes your grasp. What can a poor critic do with a play which raises no principle, whether of art or morals, creates its own canons and conventions, and is nothing but an absolutely wilful expression of an irrepressibly witty personality? Mr. Pater, I think (or is it some one else?), has an essay on the tendency of all art to verge towards, and merge in, the absolute art—music. He might have found an example in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, which imitates nothing, represents nothing, means nothing, is nothing, except a sort of *rondo capriccioso*, in which the artist's fingers run with crisp irresponsibility up and down the keyboard of life. Why attempt to analyse and class such a play? Its theme, in other hands, would have made a capital farce; but "farce" is far too gross and commonplace a word to apply to such an iridescent filament of fantasy. Incidents of the same nature as Algy Moncrieffe's "Bunburying" and John Worthing's invention and subsequent suppression of his scapegrace brother Ernest have done duty in many a French vaudeville and English adaptation; but Mr. Wilde's humour transmutes them into some-

thing entirely new and individual. Amid so much that is negative, however, criticism may find one positive remark to make. Behind all Mr. Wilde's whim and even perversity, there lurks a very genuine science, or perhaps I should rather say instinct, of the theatre. In all his plays, and certainly not least in this one, the story is excellently told and illustrated with abundance of scenic detail. Monsieur Sarcey himself (if Mr. Wilde will forgive my saying so) would "chortle in his joy" over John Worthing's entrance in deep mourning (even down to his cane) to announce the death of his brother Ernest, when we know that Ernest in the flesh—a false but undeniable Ernest—is at that moment in the house making love to Cecily. The audience does not instantly awaken to the meaning of his inky suit, but even as he marches solemnly down the stage, and before a word is spoken, you can feel the idea kindling from row to row, until a "sudden glory" of laughter fills the theatre. It is only the born playwright who can imagine and work up to such an effect. Not that the play is a masterpiece of construction. It seemed to me that the author's invention languished a little after the middle of the second act, and that towards the close of that act there were even one or two brief patches of something almost like tediousness. But I have often noticed that the more successful the play, the more a

first-night audience is apt to be troubled by inequalities of workmanship, of which subsequent audiences are barely conscious. The most happily-inspired scenes, coming to us with the gloss of novelty upon them, give us such keen pleasure, that passages which are only reasonably amusing are apt to seem, by contrast, positively dull. Later audiences, missing the shock of surprise which gave to the master-scenes their keenest zest, are also spared our sense of disappointment in the flatter passages, and enjoy the play more evenly all through. I myself, on seeing a play a second time, have often been greatly entertained by scenes which had gone near to boring me on the first night. When I see Mr. Wilde's play again, I shall no doubt relish the last half of the second act more than I did on Thursday evening; and even then I differed from some of my colleagues who found the third act tedious. Mr. Wilde is least fortunate where he drops into Mr. Gilbert's Palace-of-Truth mannerism, as he is apt to do in the characters of Gwendolen and Cecily. Strange what a fascination this trick seems to possess for the comic playwright! Mr. Pinero, Mr. Shaw, and now Mr. Wilde, have all dabbled in it, never to their advantage. In the hands of its inventor it produces pretty effects enough;

But Gilbert's magic may not copied be;
Within that circle none should walk but he.

The acting is as hard to write about as the play. It is all good; but there is no opportunity for any striking excellence. The performers who are most happily suited are clearly Mr. Allan Aynesworth and Miss Rose Leclercq, both of whom are delightful. Mr. Alexander gives his ambition a rest, and fills his somewhat empty part with spirit and elegance. Miss Irene Vanbrugh makes a charmingly sophisticated maiden of Mayfair, and Miss Evelyn Millard, if not absolutely in her element as the unsophisticated Cecily, is at least graceful and pleasing. Mrs. Canninge and Mr. H. H. Vincent complete a very efficient cast.

There are some genuinely amusing passages in the last act of Mr. Ralph Lumley's "comic play" *Thorough-Bred*,* produced last week at Toole's Theatre. If you ask me why Mr. Toole, Mr. Fitzroy Morgan, and Mr. Shelton appear on the Ascot racecourse in the disguise of nigger minstrels, I really cannot tell you—possibly because I did not follow the earlier acts with the attention demanded by their extreme intricacy of plot. But whatever the

* February 14—March 23; after the first night or two, Mr. Toole was prevented by illness from appearing. The piece was reproduced on Easter Monday, April 15, and ran till June 8, Mr. Rutland Barrington taking Mr. Toole's original character during the greater part of the time. Mr. Toole himself reappeared in it September 3—September 28, when it was stated that his lease of the theatre expired.

reason or no-reason, the scene is laughable, and so is Mr. Van Decker's wooing. The audience seemed to be pleased with the earlier acts as well, and the whole piece is at least quite harmless and unpretending. Mr. Toole was evidently suffering severe pain on the first night, but got through his part bravely; and Mr. C. M. Lowne gave a really clever and finished performance of a good-humoured American—the best character and the best-acted in the play. Miss Henrietta Watson and Miss Cora Poole played with agreeable vivacity, and Messrs. Fitzroy Morgan and E. A. Coventry were now and then amusing.

"I should have told him everything before we were married," says the lady who gives its title to *An M.P.'s Wife*,* adapted from a novel by Mr. Thomas Terrell, and produced at the Opera Comique last Saturday. She is quite right, she certainly should; but, as things turned out, her omission to do so didn't in the least matter. The play, in short, is feebly conceived, clumsily constructed, and badly written. It does not rise above the most ordinary matinée level. Miss T. White played the heroine with more earnestness than skill; Mr. W. Herbert was solid and satisfactory as her husband; and Mr. Charles Glenney imported a certain originality into the part of her cast-off lover by playing a passionate

* February 15—"for six nights only." Mr. Frederick de Lara's season.

parting scene—"Ruth, perhaps to-night will be the last time we shall ever meet!" and so forth)—with his left hand immovably in his pocket!

X.

"GENTLEMAN JOE."*

6th March.

It is odd how a trifling circumstance will sometimes break through the veils of Habit and enable one to see a familiar thing in its essence, as something quite new and strange. It happened on Saturday night that I arrived at the Prince of Wales's Theatre a little late; only a very little, and I had an end stall. The performance, at all events, was in full swing; I had plunged straight out of the real world into the world of convention, with nothing to break the shock. The rest of the audience had waited some time in the garish theatre; the rhythms of the overture had got into their blood; they were strung up to concert pitch. I, on the other hand, coming in cold blood (literally as well as figuratively) from the greasy, grimy gloom of Coventry Street into this scene of glittering make-believe, saw it for the moment with unaccustomed eyes; and I cannot tell you how strange and melan-

* March 2—still running.

choly, and above all how unspeakably senseless and vulgar, it seemed to me. You see, I was morbidly conscious of the glare, and had not, like the rest of the audience, fallen under the glamour. The scene, a villa garden with house and verandah in the background, was crowded with people—maidservants, menservants, policemen, soldiers, tradesmen—all in everyday costume only a trifle more gaudy than usual. In front, a little lady, dressed like a housemaid on her day out, was singing in a shrill voice this refrain:

"O my ! O my ! O my, my, my !
I didn't know whether to laugh or cry !
I'll never forget, if I try till I die,
What I felt in that there wink of an eye !"

The refrain over, she at once began to caper about the stage, vigorously, and I have no doubt cleverly, but without the least pretence at grace, revealing billowy whirlpools of green skirt and stocking under her black gown. And, at a given moment, behold ! all the rest of the people on the stage began to caper too. They faced each other in pairs, and set to jigging it—grown men and women—not in figures, not in elaborate steps, not pretending to express any emotion or any dramatic idea, but simply bobbing up and down to the music, as though seized with an acute paroxysm of St. Vitus's dance. Of course I am not describing anything new. The scene is absolutely familiar to all

of us, though perhaps the stage-management was in this case a little more epileptic than usual. It is a purely subjective phenomenon that I am recording : a mood in which the grotesqueness of the whole thing—grown men and women capering like Bedlamites for the delectation of grown men and women—suddenly came over me. I was for the nonce in the position of the traditional deaf man at a ball ; but the deaf man, if the dancing was good and he watched it carefully, would probably be able to divine something of the rhythm of a waltz or mazurka, and to realise that the dancers were obeying a certain law, and enjoying, pair by pair, a complex harmony in the movements of their bodies. Here there was no harmony, scarcely any skill, less than no beauty. The whole thing was inspired by a mere conventional and insensate lust of movement for movement's sake. And when the song was encored, the chorus gravely trooped back to their stations, and at the proper moment set to jigging it anew, for all the world like the puppets in a clockwork raree-show when you put a penny in the slot. Of course we have all seen the same thing a hundred times ; yet for the moment it could scarcely have seemed more odd and incredible to me if I had dropped straight from Mars.

But presently the planetary mood wore off. Mr. Arthur Roberts came on the scene, and I fell under the witchery of his art. I could say with the poet :

"O my, my, my !

I didn't know whether to laugh or to cry !

I can never express, if I try till I die,

What I think of the wink of that glittering eye !"

Seriously, he was irresistibly comic, and the production as a whole is by no means the worst of its class. Mr. Basil Hood writes spirited and clever rhymes—not so witty, perhaps, as Mr. "Adrian Ross's" or even Mr. Harry Greenbank's, but infinitely better than the inane stuff that passed for verse in the Byron Reece and Farnie times. Mr. Walter Slaughter's music struck me as skilful and tuneful, and some of the singing was quite pleasant—notably Mr. William Philp's and Miss Aïda Jenoure's. Miss Kitty Loftus, as the pretty housemaid, made up in vivacity what she lacked in voice ; Miss Sadie Jerome, as the American heiress, carried everything before her in virtue of her commanding presence and impetuous style ; Mr. W. H. Denny's talent was unfortunately wasted on an exceedingly ineffective part. Early in the evening, there occurred an incident which aptly illustrated the impossibility of any effectual censorship by an official who merely sees the written words of a play. The fascinating cabman, Gentleman Joe, who has been invited by the pretty housemaid to a servants' party, arrives at the house and inquires for Emma. "Hemma," replies the butler, "is getting ready to see you, and is taking off her things." As

she has just come in from a walk this is a perfectly natural remark, and any censor who should object to it might be suspected of almost insane prurience. But Mr. Arthur Roberts, by the artful intonation of his "Oh!" helped out with a leer and a grimace, converts the innocent remark into an indecency as palpable as it is senseless. The censor who cannot keep the low comedian in order is of very little avail; and I know of only one censor who can.

XI.

THE CENSORSHIP.*

Pall Mall Budget, 7th March.

It is quite possible that before these lines are published "the miracle of miracles" may have happened, and some one who is to-day a person of no importance, rubbing shoulders with the rest of us on the common earth, may have been snatched up into the heaven of Court Officialdom, and endowed with absolute, irresponsible power over the destinies of the English drama. It is a strong testimony to the force of habit—and especially to that ingrained Puritanism which leads us to regard the stage as a sort of pariah

* Mr. E. F. S. Pigott died February 23. His successor was not yet appointed.

among institutions, incapable of natural or legal rights—that the tragi-comic absurdity of this arrangement does not, as it were, strike us in the face. Here is Mr. A—— B——, or Mr. C—— D——, a minor journalist or literary man-of-all-work. To-day he is an ordinary fallible mortal; his opinion on any literary or dramatic topic may fetch twopence or threepence a line in the open market, but is quite unsuspected of plenary inspiration; to-morrow, because he knows some one who knows some one who is in the Lord Chamberlain's Department, that opinion sets an immovable limit to the growth of a whole branch of literature, and may block the career and ruin the fortunes of men far abler and no whit less honourable than he! Was there ever a more fantastic anomaly?

The late Mr. Pigott—I say this with absolute sincerity and after having looked into the matter pretty closely—was probably the least ridiculous Censor we ever had. The history of his predecessors is farcical to a degree; his record presents rather the pathos of a good man's struggles with adversity. He lived in difficult times; troubles thickened around him as the years went on; but he came through it all with a certain mute dignity which one could not but respect. Well might Mr. Pinero and Mr. H. A. Jones lay wreaths on his coffin; they may esteem themselves fortunate if they find half such an accommodating

autocrat in his successor. For Mr. Pigott's tact, which we are all unwearied in praising, was precisely the quality that served their turn. It was more than tact—it was discretion in the Falstaffian sense of the term. Mr. Pigott was far too wise, and too sincerely convinced of the necessity of a Censorship, to make his office unpopular. The powerful playwright, the playwright with an actor-manager behind him, might do or say pretty much what he pleased. For the showman who approached our autocrat in the character of managing-director of a wealthy syndicate, his bounties were infinite. Hence the possibility of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, *The Masqueraders*, and *The Case of Rebellious Susan* on the one hand, *The Gaiety Girl* and *Go-Bang* on the other. It will be fortunate indeed for Mr. Pinero and Mr. Jones, for Mr. "Owen Hall" and Mr. "Adrian Ross," if his successor's "tact" should prove equally sensitive.

It is sometimes supposed that my opposition to the Censorship springs from, or is embittered by, my championship of Ibsen. Mr. Pigott himself said as much before the Select Committee of 1892, and even hinted that I had a pecuniary interest in the matter. In that, I think, his tact failed him. It would not matter one penny piece to me though every line that Ibsen ever wrote were placed under the Censor's ban. I have not, and never have had, any pecuniary interest, definite or contingent, in any representation of a play

of Ibsen's, except one single afternoon performance which took place fifteen years ago, and to which the Censor offered no opposition. When this was pointed out to Mr. Pigott, he omitted to apologise or withdraw his inuendo, which you may read at large on p. 334 of the report of the Committee of 1892. Perhaps apologies are contrary to the regulations of the Lord Chamberlain's Department. Moreover, all the arguments I have ever advanced against the Censorship are to be found in an article by me published in the *Westminster Review* in 1883 or 1884, at least five years before I had translated anything of Ibsen's (the one play aforesaid again excepted), and before I so much as dreamt that he would ever become famous in England or would need any "championing." One may surely, without suspicion of base or personal motives, oppose the system which places a great and beautiful art, absolutely and without appeal, in subjection to the "tact" of a Mr. Pigott.

But in any case, no one can reasonably complain of Mr. Pigott's treatment of Ibsen. He vetoed one play—*Ghosts*—and he could not possibly do otherwise. To have licensed it would have been simply to abdicate his office. There is no getting away from the fact that the Censorship exists for the protection of certain institutions, which *Ghosts* roundly attacks. If we have a Censorship at all, it must clearly veto *Ghosts*; just as, if we had a literary Censor, he could

not possibly give his imprimatur to Mr. Grant Allen's *Woman who Did*, or to Miss Ménie Muriel Dowie's *Gallia*. It would be futile to blame Mr. Pigott for recognising the most elementary obligation of his office; the doubt is whether it be the business of good government to crush art and gag discussion, in order to protect from without institutions which ought to be able to defend themselves from within. If that be indeed the principle of good government, let us carry it out consistently, make the Archbishop of Canterbury the censor of literature, and have the *Areopagitica* burnt by the common hangman. The fact of his having risen to the Primacy at least guarantees in the Archbishop of Canterbury a certain measure of exceptional ability; in the case of the Lord Chamberlain and his autocrat-underling, this guarantee is entirely lacking.

To blame Mr. Pigott, then, for vetoing *Ghosts* would be tantamount to blaming him for not resigning his office. (By the way, *Ghosts* was never officially presented to him; but he was approached on the subject and was found to regard the play as hopelessly inadmissible.) All Ibsen's other plays that were submitted to him he licensed without a murmur. His reasons you will find set forth in the aforesaid blue-book. He thought that "all Ibsen's characters were morally deranged," but that the plays were "too absurd altogether to be injurious to public morals." Yet stay! I should not say that he licensed them

“without a murmur.” When the MS. of *Hedda Gabler* was submitted to him, he wrote to the management to the effect that a formal licence would follow in due course, but that they must first send him the end of the play. “The manuscript submitted,” he said (I quote from memory), “ends with the phrase, ‘People don’t do such things!’ which cannot be the real conclusion.” Poor bewildered gentleman! It would be curious to know what terrible impropriety he imagined that the grim old Giant of the North had kept lurking up his sleeve. I believe, too, that he advised, without insisting on, the suppression of a single line in *The Pillars of Society*; otherwise, he kept his “kindly blue pencil” entirely in abeyance, so far as Ibsen was concerned. This was a case in which his tact, his opportunism, was really beyond reproach.

I earnestly recommend you to study Mr. Pigott’s evidence in the 1892 Blue-Book, which may be bought of Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode for 4s. 10½d. He was evidently an amiable and simple-minded person. He began by protesting against the term “Censor,” which to many minds, he said, “represents the Star Chamber and the Inquisition, and all manner of ancient institutions; whereas my office is simply that of Examiner.” He did not explain in what respect an Examiner who can secretly and silently suppress a play differs from a Censor. But this secrecy, you must know, was, in Mr. Pigott’s eyes, the most beneficent characteristic

of his—Examinership. "The essence of my office," he said, "and its advantage to the art and professors of the stage, is that it is preventive, *and, above all, secret*; if authors whose plays are rejected choose to advertise themselves and their rejected plays *in the hopes of getting other orders for similar pieces*, that is their affair, not mine." What childish nonsense! It is an "advantage" to an author to have a year's work annihilated without explanation or appeal! And if he does not accept the decree in grateful silence, it can only be because he hopes to get an order for another play that shall merit similar annihilation! Of course, Mr. Pigott was bound, *ex officio*, to regard managers and authors as ribald rascals who would at once proceed to wallow in indecency if the check of the Censorship were withdrawn; but one does not quite understand why he should take them for rank lunatics.

In the meantime, pending the "miracle of miracles," the theatres are getting on as best they may. Mr. Arthur Roberts appeared on Saturday night at the Prince of Wales's in a new musical farce entitled *Gentleman Joe*, which was received with salvoes of applause and yells of delight. The plot is quite inoffensive, but there are one or two passages in the dialogue which brought to my mind one of the late Mr. Pigott's charming sayings in the blue-book above cited. "The public," he remarked, "have sometimes

thought that the Examiner's indulgence was carried too far; but it has sometimes occurred to me that but for such occasional relaxations the public might imagine that any restraint was uncalled for, and, indeed, that there was nothing to restrain." Delightful, is it not? When we find a gross indecency in a play, we are to understand that the Censor has left it there of set purpose, as a proof of his vigilance, and a reminder of its necessity! And yet Mr. Pigott, say his biographers, hailed from Somerset, not Ireland.*

* "Mr. Pigott," said the *Times* of August 1, 1874, in announcing his appointment to the office of Censor, "was educated at Eton and Balliol, and has been called to the Bar. Among his qualifications is that of being an excellent French scholar, and among his foreign friends may be enumerated the great comedian, M. Régnier, of the Comédie Française, the Duc d'Aumale, and the late M. Van de Weyer." Here the list of his qualifications came to an abrupt end; and it struck neither the *Times* nor any one else as at all incongruous that this estimable journalist, who knew French and a French actor, should be entrusted with absolute and irresponsible power over the destinies of the English drama and over the property and reputation of English dramatists.

XII.

"SOWING THE WIND."

13th March.

IN the revival of Mr. Sydney Grundy's *Sowing the Wind* at the Comedy Theatre,* the part of Rosamund was undertaken by Miss Evelyn Millard, who came very well out of the severe test of following Miss Winifred Emery at so brief an interval. Miss Millard has feeling, intelligence, and charm; what she lacks as yet is the art of indicating the processes of thought which lie behind her utterance. Her words seem to flow easily and evenly from the surface of her mind, not to force their way up, through devious and intricate channels, from the hidden springs of her character. She accompanies them with appropriate and graceful manifestations of emotion, but we feel it to be the emotion of a reciter touched by her theme rather than that of a woman living through a heart-rending experience. What we see is not Rosamund suffering, but Miss Millard sympathising with Rosamund's sufferings. I admit, however, that it is rather unfair to apply this supersubtle analysis to so charming a performance. There are very few pieces of emotional acting to which the same objection might not plausibly apply; and, after all, the fault may lie

. * March 9—April 6.

rather in the critic's momentary mood than in the art of the actress. Mr. H. B. Irving was scarcely convincing as Lord Petworth. The curl on his forehead, by the way, gave him a curious resemblance to Lord Beaconsfield. Mr. Brandon Thomas, Mr. Cyril Maude, and Mr. Sydney Brough resumed their original parts, Mr. C. W. Garthorne replaced Mr. Edmund Maurice as the Tom-and-Jerry buck Sir Richard Cursitor, and Miss Kate Phillips took Miss Rose Leclercq's part of Mrs. Fretwell. The third act, an exceptionally brilliant piece of theatrical writing, was received, as it always is, with thunders of applause.

XIII.

"THE NOTORIOUS MRS. EBBSMITH."

20th March.

THE *St. James's Gazette*, in an article headed "The Notorious Mr. Redford,"* argues that because Mr. Pinero's new play at the Garrick has been licensed, the Censorship is not practically repressive to dramatic literature. Ingenuous *St. James's*! Does it really

* The appointment of Mr. George Redford, a gentleman in the employ of the London and South Western Bank, to the office of Examiner of Plays, was announced immediately after the production of *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*.

imagine that if *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith** had been the work of an unknown writer, or, indeed, of any one but Mr. Pinero, it would have been licensed? Not a bit of it. This admirable work, which even Mr. Clement Scott hails as "a tragedy which brings out in authorship and acting the very best that we have got in English art," would have been consigned to the limbo of still-born improprieties. As it is, we all know that *Mrs. Ebbsmith* escaped the veto by the skin of her "pretty white teeth." I speak simply from common report. I have no private information on the point, from Mr. Pinero or any one else. If I asked Mr. Pinero for the "true truth" of the matter, he would probably have to place me under a promise of secrecy; for it is one of the pleasing traditions of Stable Yard, St. James's, to consider as "confidential" any communication it deigns to hold with its victims, and to put on airs of injury if its sayings or doings are allowed to leak out. I prefer, then, not to go to headquarters for information, but simply to challenge the Vehmgericht to deny that *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* was within an ace of being consigned to one of its oubliettes. Frankly, I could find it in my heart to wish that it had been. The time is pretty nearly ripe for the revolt that must come

* March 13—May 11. On May 15, Miss Olga Nethersole succeeded Mrs. Patrick Campbell in the title-part, and the run was continued until June 14. See p. 161.

sooner or later—the storming of the secret, silent Bastille. But prudence eventually prevailed in Stable Yard, and the fight is postponed till further notice.

The new play is in all essentials a great advance on *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. Those critics who take the opposite view are in reality hankering after the more commonplace and melodramatic elements in the earlier play. In it we had character precipitated by external coincidence; here we have character working itself out entirely from within. Moreover, Mr. Pinero has here chosen a much more vital theme. Most of us can afford to take a very abstract interest in the theory of marriage with a demirep. We know in advance that it is a hazardous experiment—that the county people won't call, while the lady's former associates probably will. Thus *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* is really little more than the portrait of Paula—a brilliant piece of work, but isolated, almost irrelevant. In *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, on the other hand, Mr. Pinero goes straight for the universally relevant theme of marriage in general, and draws three characters in place of one. It is unfair to complain that his treatment of the theme is inconclusive. If it had been "conclusive," on one side or other, those who dissented would have dubbed Mr. Pinero a "faddist" and complained of being preached at. What he has conclusively shown is that, as society is at present constituted, it takes exceptional

characters on both sides to make a free union any more successful than a marriage. This is not a very difficult point to prove; but as a contribution to the philosophy of the subject, it is at least as valid as Mr. Grant Allen's contention that two people of perfect character may form an ideal union "without benefit of clergy," especially if one of the parties will have the good taste to die of typhoid before time has tested the strength of the bond.

The design of the play, then, is above reproach. It is technically by far the strongest thing our modern stage has to show. An expository character or two might perhaps be dispensed with, and an over-nicety of explanation as to the comings and goings of the personages might possibly have been avoided; but these are the veriest trivialities. The main fact is that we have a drama consisting simply in the interaction of two characters, developing itself through four acts, without situations, revelations, starts, surprises, or picture-poster attractions of any sort, yet from first to last enthralling the attention and stimulating the intelligence. Stimulating, I say, not always satisfying; for when we come to look into the characters, we cannot but doubt whether Mr. Pinero has quite achieved what he seems to have intended. Lucas Cleeve is admirable—the man of facile enthusiasms and discouragements, "possessing ambition without patience, self-esteem without confidence"

—but Agnes Ebbsmith, however vividly and ably projected, can scarcely pass muster as a well-observed type. Mr. Pinero has not entered with sympathetic clairvoyance into the mental history and habit—he has not even mastered the vocabulary, the jargon, if you will—of the class of woman he sets out to portray. I suspect him of holding "views" as to feminine human nature in general; and "views," like knotty window-panes, are fatal to observation. In this he is by no means alone. Nine-tenths of masculine woman-drawing is vitiated by "views"—and, in these latter days, about nineteen-twentieths of feminine woman-drawing. You may think it a reckless paradox, but Ibsen seems to me one of the few modern writers whose studies of feminine character are undistorted by "views." He does not go to work syllogistically, saying to himself, "All women are this, that, and the other thing; my heroine is a woman; therefore she is this, that, and the other thing." He looks straight at and through women, and draws them in their infinite variety. Time was when he, too, held views, and then he drew *his* Agnes, and other characters of that order. They were beautiful in their time, but he has gone far beyond them. Ten years hence we may perhaps be saying the same of Mr. Pinero's Agnes.

She is the daughter, so she says, of a revolutionary Socialist, atheist, and all the rest of it; yet her whole

habit of mind is that of one who has been steeped from the outset in orthodoxy, and has embraced heterodoxy in fear and trembling, with a sense of strangeness and adventure. "In spite of father's unbelief and mother's indifference," she says, "I was in my heart as devout as any girl in a parsonage. . . . Whenever I could escape from our stifling rooms at home, the air blew away uncertainty and scepticism." We are told of no external influence that made her regard her father's ideas as "strange," and think of his paganism as "scepticism." Mr. Pinero seems to assume "devoutness" as a sort of universal instinct of the childish, or at any rate of the woman-childish, heart, and to conceive that this instinct alone would prevent the ideas of a much-loved father from "soaking into" his daughter. Now, as a matter of fact (I don't think Mr. Diggle himself would deny this), your ordinary child is instinctively an out-and-out pagan. The childish criticism of the universe is remorselessly rationalistic. It is religion, not irreligion, that a child requires to be taught. The father's agnosticism might not soak very deep into the child, and might be effectually counteracted by some other and more positive influence; but we hear of nothing of the sort. It is even possible that, by some freak of atavism, like that which makes the daughter of Mr. Grant Allen's *Woman who Did* an incurable little snob and numskull, the atheist father

and indifferent mother might produce a daughter with a constitutional bent towards mysticism, an innate genius for piety. But that is not Agnes's case. For fourteen years of her mature life she has been a pagan; for six of them she has been an active propagandist; she conceives herself to be still a pagan at the very moment when, by talking of "uncertainty and scepticism," "hope and faith," she shows that she regards religious belief as the normal and fundamental attitude of the human mind. Now, whether this be so or not, it is certainly the last thing that a woman like Agnes would admit or assume. Her spiritual history does not hang together. It is not probably constructed or possibly expressed. Mr. Pinero has failed to put himself in the position of what may be called a congenital pagan—a woman who from childhood has taken in rationalism at the pores of her skin, as most children take in Christianity. Yet that, for aught we can see or reasonably conjecture, is precisely Agnes's case. It seems to be Mr. Pinero's belief that "every woman is at heart a"—saint. The Bible incident, I take it, at the end of the third act, symbolises his "view" that no woman is strong enough to go through life without some supernatural refuge to fly to in time of need; so that, even if she thinks she has cast her "hope and faith" into the fire, she will presently pluck them out again, though she sear her flesh in the attempt. Well,

there are instances that favour that view, and I think there are instances against it. But though we may cite women who preach atheism to-day, and go to confession or to Thibet to-morrow, while they *are* secularists they stand at, and speak from, the secularist's point of view. Agnes Ebbsmith, on the other hand, even in expounding her heterodoxy, unconsciously adopts the standpoint and uses the language of orthodoxy.

Equally unrealised are her sociological doctrines. John Thorold, for instance, must have been a very strange Socialist if his daughter ever heard him talking about "division of wealth, and the rest of it." That is the language of the gentleman who writes to the *Times* to point out that, if all property were equally divided to-day, there would be rich men and poor men to-morrow, millionaires and paupers the day after. This Socialist daughter of a Socialist does not know the phraseology of her party. Again, her objections to marriage are curiously—shall I say empirical? Because her father and mother and "most of our married friends" lived a cat-and-dog life, and because her own husband was a brute, she sets forth to preach Free Union as the panacea for a cantankerous world. It does not seem to enter her head that there are drawbacks to marriage even between people of reasonably good tempers, good hearts, and good manners. Of the economic, ethical,

and sentimental commonplaces of attack upon marriage, which a woman in her position would be bound to have at her fingers' ends, she appears to know nothing. It is especially noteworthy that she ignores the question of children, as affecting the relation of the sexes. The world of her speculations is a childless world. A triangle, in her trigonometry, consists of two straight lines. Her struggle, too, against what she calls "passion," seems to me to show a misconception on Mr. Pinero's part of the type of woman with whom he is dealing—or rather a confusion of two distinct types. He thinks vaguely of rebellion against the primary conditions of sex as a general characteristic of the "new" or advanced woman. Now there are—or rather there have been, for the type is surely "going out"—women constitutionally inaccessible to passion, who resent it as a degrading servitude, and would fain make their individual limitation a law, or an ideal, for their fellow-women. But such women would be the last to enter on a free union. Married they may be—they may have taken on the yoke before they realised their own temperament, or they may have condescended to marriage for the sake of its social and economic advantages. But love, in the largest sense of the word, is as incomprehensible to them as passion. They do not want even the friendship or close companionship of a man. Their instinct is to make their

own sex as nearly as possible self-sufficing. Why, then, should they incur all sorts of social disadvantages for the sake of a companionship which they do not require or desire? And, in any case, Agnes is clearly not a creature of this brood. She is not naturally a passionless woman. She loves Lucas, in the fullest sense of the word, with a love that survives even her fuller insight into his character. Her aspiration towards a "colder, more temperate, more impassive companionship," is a merely intellectual vagary, and I venture to think that it springs from a misconception on Mr. Pinero's part. Newspaper moralists have so persistently prefixed the stereotypes "sexless" and "unsexed" to the "new woman" that he has been betrayed into grafting an inconsistent attribute upon his heroine's character. The real, or, at any rate, the characteristic, "new woman" accepts with something more than equanimity the destinies of her sex, and would certainly not ignore the possibility of motherhood in her rearrangement of the scheme of things. One could understand Agnes's position if her previous experience of marriage had given her such a horror of "passion" that she had resolved from the very outset to maintain her companionship with Lucas on a supersexual basis. But we are told in so many words that this is not the case. Her rebellion against passion is an afterthought, and surely an improbable one. It might

pass as a whim of the moment, but such a whim should be the subject of a comedietta, not of a serious play.

Perhaps you think that, if these criticisms are justified, there is very little of Agnes left. But when you see the play you will discover that they are more verbal than essential—that in order to obviate them only a few changes of phraseology would be required, the main lines of the action, the fundamental processes of emotion, remaining unaltered. I, for my part, flatly dissent from that "view" of Mr. Pinero's, to which we owe the Bible incident and the pietistic end; but, after all, he has a perfect right to hold and illustrate this view. For the rest, *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* seems to me the work of a born and highly accomplished dramatist, who goes right essentially and by instinct, and wrong superficially, for lack of special knowledge. It should be quite possible to tell Agnes's story, up to the moment when she thrusts her hand into the fire, without altering a single incident or emotion, yet in such a way as to obviate all the above objections, which are founded upon phrases rather than facts. But here I must break off a discussion which has already exceeded all bounds. I hope to resume it in another article, and to say something of the acting.

XIV.

“MRS. EBBSMITH” AGAIN—“A LOVING LEGACY”—
“SALVÉ”—“THE BLUE BOAR.”

27th March.

AFTER pointing out, last week, what seem to me certain errors of observation in the character of Agnes Ebbsmith, I stated my belief that these errors are verbal rather than essential. It should be possible, I said, to tell Agnes's story, at any rate up to the end of the third act, without altering any incident or emotion, yet in such a way as to obviate all my criticisms. Let me now make the attempt; repeating, however, that my—what shall I call it?—my exposition stops short at the Bible incident. To account for that, it would be necessary to introduce a new element into Agnes's previous history; and that is against the rules of the game.

Well then—she is the daughter of a Socialist orator, has imbibed her father's religious and political ideas, and has seen, in her home life, the miseries of an ill-assorted marriage. Nevertheless, she marries early, to find herself her husband's sultana for one year and his servant for seven—at the end of which period he dies. Confirmed, by her personal ill-hap, in her allegiance to her father's ideas, she becomes an active

propagandist of social democracy and female emancipation ; but losing her voice and being in the pinch of poverty, she takes to nursing as a means of livelihood, and in the course of her duties comes across Lucas Cleeve. All this is probable enough, and all this is precisely what Agnes relates of herself. It is not in the facts, but in her wording of them that the improbability comes in. She speaks of both free-thought and socialism, not as one to the manner born, but rather as one not yet acclimatised, and ignorant of technicalities and shibboleths. Lucas Cleeve (to return to the story) is in the hot fit of rebellion against marriage with a hard-natured worldly woman who despises him instead of bringing him the sympathy and appreciation for which his weak egoism craves. These qualities, together with a tender unworldliness, he finds in Agnes. Illness and distance make his old life and its ambitions and interests seem infinitely aloof from him, and he is quite ready to be infected by the enthusiasms of this stately creature, the antithesis in every respect of the wife who has wounded him. He loves in her a "ministering angel," and she a convert in him. So they cast in their lots together, and we find them in Venice. But now, as Lucas regains strength, and as the decisive moment approaches when he must break once for all with his traditions and his career, the habits of his caste reassert themselves, and he finds his

enthusiasm for free union in the abstract, and for social democracy in the concrete, rapidly cooling. He still loves Agnes, but not as she longs to be loved. He loves her in spite of, not in and for, her ideas. She gradually comes to feel that her aspirations towards "plain living and high thinking," towards labour, and if need be martyrdom, for social emancipation and justice, are in his eyes little better than eccentricities of which she must be gradually cured. He would have her put on the gowns and the prejudices of his caste. She sees, with deep humiliation, that she holds him by his senses, not by his intellect; that they are not fellow-workers in a great cause, not shining examples of a high ideal, but are simply living in vulgar vice, a rich young profligate and his mistress. On realising this, she tries to save her self-respect by raising their companionship to a purely intellectual and supersexual plane; so that even this recrudescence of the innate puritanism of the English middle-classes becomes comprehensible enough if we take it, not as a general characteristic of the type of woman Mr. Pinero is portraying, but as resulting from the special circumstances of Agnes's case. At this juncture the Duke of St. Olpherts comes on the scene, a living embodiment of all those forces in Lucas's nature against which Agnes is carrying on a despairing battle. She knows that what seemed eccentric in Lucas's own eyes will

appear grotesque and hateful when seen in the concave mirror of the Duke's scepticism. She seeks an encounter with the Duke so as to know and measure her adversary. To say that such a woman would not "Trafalgar Square" him in her own drawing-room is absurd. There is a great deal of human nature even in collectivists, and it would be a foolish affectation on her part to treat the Duke as though they met on the neutral territory of ordinary social intercourse. The verbal form of her "Trafalgar Squaring" may be open to criticism; the fact is natural and even inevitable. Having gauged the Duke's strength, she sees that she must either give up the battle or fight him with his own weapons. To give it up would be not only to lose a convert and shatter a still fascinating dream, but to submit to the soiling of her life with a futile and degrading episode. It is tolerable, it may even be piquant, not to be a man's first love; it is intolerably humiliating not to be his last. So she determines to fight the Duke—the World, the Flesh, and the Devil incarnate—with his own weapons. She has wit and beauty; she will use them! She puts off the "dowdy demagogue" and puts on the bewitching woman; and hey presto! Faust is at her feet again and Mephistopheles is apparently routed. And now, to her own surprise, she finds herself, for a moment, thrilling with the joy of triumph—and of surrender. "Her sex has found her out"; she knows

that it is no longer the convert she loves in Lucas, but the man; and beneath her sense of treachery to her ideals, she is conscious of a tremulous delight. It was in this phase of the character that Mrs. Patrick Campbell's otherwise brilliant performance seemed to me to fall a little short. It may be that I am refining too much upon Mr. Pinero's conception, but I can certainly see nothing *inconsistent* with a reading more subtle and at the same time more human than Mrs. Campbell's. The actress seemed to feel only the irony in Agnes's thoughts, not the genuine underlying joy. There was nothing but bitterness in her realisation that her "woman's one hour" had come; and that I cannot take to have been the author's meaning. It is true that Agnes had expected her hour to come in a very different shape; but her sentiment on finding that it has taken her by surprise is surely not one of mere disgust and discontent. Mrs. Campbell seemed to me to ignore in effect, as she certainly delivered without conviction, that outburst of Agnes's in answer to the Duke's wish that Lucas were "a different sort of feller"—"Nothing matters now—not even that. He's mine. He would have died but for me. I gave him life. He is my child, my husband, my lover, my bread, my daylight—all—everything. Mine. Mine." Beautiful and fascinating as Mrs. Campbell undoubtedly was throughout, I could not but find a certain superficiality, hardness, almost shrewishness,

in her treatment of the third act. Agnes's "hour," at any rate, is a very brief one. Lucas has not sense enough to realise her sacrifice. Finding her, as he thinks, "gowned" and in her right mind, he must needs take the opportunity to insult and exult over the ideals and aspirations which were to have been the bond of union between them; and she sees that at best she has to face a second cycle of passion and satiety, like that of her first marriage. Then, putting him to the test with death in her heart, she finds him prepared for, and even hankering after, a squalid compromise, in which she, instead of making her life a proud and open protest against the slavery of marriage, is to join the furtive horde of mercenary irregulars who smooth the way for the triumphant march of the-hymeneal legion. At this her soul revolts; and leaving behind her the four words, "My hour is over," she departs from the palace of her day-dream, which has become in her eyes a house of shame.

Have I kept my promise? Frankly, I think so. I have told the story of a very true, very subtle, and very tragic play, a play which none but a master dramatist could have invented and composed; and it is simply Mr. Pinero's play up to the last five minutes of the third act, with nothing added, and nothing essential left out. It is the play you can see every night at the Garrick Theatre, somewhat, but very

slightly, obscured by a few unrealised phrases placed in Agnes's mouth. Mr. Pinero, I take it, is much in the position of (say) a clergyman of great ability, insight, and literary power, who should undertake to write a novel of stage-life, having an actress for its heroine, with no more intimate knowledge of the stage, and its ways of thought and speech, than may be gained from a few casual visits to the Lyceum stalls. He might quite well draw a very true and fascinating woman, though an unconvincing actress; and Agnes, in the same way, is a very true and fascinating woman, though an unconvincing Socialist and Secularist. I wish the play ended, as it might very well, at the point where my narrative leaves off. It is at this point that Mr. Pinero's preconceived "view" of feminine character intervenes, to my thinking, rather disastrously. I see no reason why Agnes should throw the Bible into the fire, no reason why she should pluck it out again. That seems to me the culmination of another play, another character-study. As for the great scene of the last act—the scene between Agnes and Sybil Cleeve—it is a daring and scathing piece of satire, but somewhat of a superfluity none the less. Agnes's acquiescence in Sybil's proposal simply takes my breath away. I can trace it only to a queer survival of the heroic-self-sacrifice superstition which inspired so many of the French sentimental dramas of twenty years ago. One might

almost say of it, as Dr. Johnson said of the *Beggar's Opera*: "There is in it such a labefaction of all principles as may be injurious to morality."

Of Mrs. Patrick Campbell's performance I have already spoken. Mr. Hare's Duke of St. Olpherts is one of his most masterly studies. It has gained in firmness and precision since the first night, and is now a perfect impersonation. Both on the first night and when I saw the play again, Mr. Forbes Robertson seemed to me a little too much bent on showing that he saw through Lucas Cleeve. He "gave him away" too frankly, especially in the third act. I could imagine a more plausible rendering of the character, but scarcely one that would be more effective from the point of view of the average audience.

And now, in conclusion, a word in Mr. Pinero's ear. He has written two profoundly interesting and admirable plays—plays which deserve to take rank with the best French and German work of the day—plays which those only can despise who make a virtue of despising the theatre as a whole. We are very grateful to him for what he has done, though he may perhaps think that some of us are tolerably successful in dissembling our gratitude. But when we put *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* beside *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, and try to generalise their characteristics, the first that strikes us is a certain depressing negativity—I had almost said aridity. They are studies

in failure—the failure of marriage, the failure of love, the failure of high idealisms, the failure of good intentions—with no glimpse of compensation, no loophole for hope, no message, no stimulus, no sustenance. They do not even “purge the heart with pity and terror.” They leave us dry-eyed and fevered rather than moved and heart-stricken. In a word, they put us on a distinctly “lowering” spiritual regimen. Mr. Pinero, I am sure, will not suspect me of clamouring for “comic,” or even sentimental, “relief.” I am not clamouring for anything or complaining of anything. Only I should be sorry if Mr. Pinero suffered this purely negative outlook upon the world to become habitual. I plead for a little more atmosphere in his work, and a more inspiring tone of thought. I am the last to make pessimism an artistic crime; but when pessimism becomes mannerism, it is certainly an artistic weakness.

Let me now briefly record a few productions which have been elbowed aside by the imperious *Mrs. Ebbsmith*. Miss Hope Booth’s second attempt to conquer the British public at the Royalty Theatre, with a variety play entitled *That Terrible Girl*,* was even more feebly deplorable than the first, and might well be passed over in silence were it not that Mr. George Giddens’s really clever performance of a German innkeeper deserves a word of mention. In

* March 9—March 22.

A Loving Legacy,* by Mr. Fred W. Sidney, at the Strand, the somewhat scabrous subject of Mario Uchard's *Mon Oncle Barbassou* is treated without unnecessary indelicacy, but also with no unnecessary outlay of wit and invention. There was one scene in the second act which threw the audience into convulsions of laughter—a silent scene, in which three Englishmen put on Turkish attire—and the rough humour of some other situations seemed to give a good deal of pleasure. The acting called for no particular remark. The programme presented by the Independent Theatre at the Opera Comique† was of a somewhat trivial character. *A Man's Love*, adapted from the Dutch of J. C. de Vos, seemed rather daring, I remember, when it was first produced; but its simplicity of action is not enough to compensate for its unsophisticated dialogue and its antiquated technical devices. *Salvé*, by Mrs. Oscar Beringer, struck me, I am sorry to say, as the most gratuitously and intolerably painful play I ever witnessed—an unexplained, unmotived horror. Knowing what was to be the catastrophe, I kept on thinking at every speech, "Now surely we are going to have some preparation for what is coming!" But no; not a word, not a hint, was vouchsafed us. The mildest,

* March 12—April 10. Transferred to Opera Comique, April 15—April 20.

† March 15 (evening) and March 16 (afternoon).

sweetest, sanest of women suddenly took up the bread-knife at her own table and stuck it into her unoffending guest—and that was all! There is no art in this, any more than in writing a line with black ink, and then opening the other ink-bottle and dabbing a blot of red on the paper. The piece was well played by Mr. Haviland, Mr. Matthew Brodie, and Mrs. Theodore Wright. *The Blue Boar*,* by Messrs. Louis N. Parker and Thornton Clark, produced on Saturday night at Terry's Theatre, contains some amusing episodes and some clever writing, but is too trivial in idea and attenuated in humour to be really worthy of the authors of *Gudgeons*. It affords a "good part" for Mr. Terry, however, and very poor parts for Miss Fanny Brough and Miss Alexes Leighton; and it gives Mr. Harcourt Beatty an opportunity to prove himself a capable comedian.

XV.

THEATRE AND MUSIC-HALL.

Pall Mall Budget, 28th March.

WITH fear and trembling I approach a dangerous topic. It is true that, as a notorious and incorrigible devotee of that effete institution, the theatre, I have

* March 23—April 20.

rather less than no character to lose ; but my deplorable "habit and repute" will scarcely save me from the chastisement due to my temerity in calling in question the supremacy of the music-hall in the world of art. For such is my audacious intent. Not that I impugn the taste of those who prefer the music-hall to the theatre ; I merely wish to inquire why, in a world where tastes proverbially differ, this preference should pass for the mark of a high, enlightened, and truly modern soul, while the contrary preference stigmatises any one who confesses to it as a person quite beyond the pale of culture. Don't tell me, dear reader, that you are not aware of this fact. Your ignorance merely shows that you are a besotted playgoer, without even the grace to be conscious of the abject inferiority of your tastes. I shouldn't wonder, now, if you think Mr. Irving, with all his faults and limitations, an abler man and a finer artist than Mr. Charles Coborn? Possibly you even go the length of preferring Mr. Hare to Mr. Herbert Campbell, and Miss Winifred Emery to Miss Bessie Bellwood? My dear sir, you are simply in outer darkness. So dense a lack of perception is unthinkable, or at least unmentionable, nowadays. People conceal such preferences as they would a deformity or a vice. Is it possible you don't know that the theatre is dead, quite dead, this many a year, and stinketh in the nostrils of the truly refined and

æsthetic; while art, real high-toned, all-alive, up-to-date Art, has taken up its abode in the Syndicate Halls? Perhaps you don't even know what *are* the Syndicate Halls? "Garn!" as the great artists say.

It was Mr. George Moore, I remember, who years ago broke to me, in conversation, the intelligence that the theatre was hopelessly played out, and that living art was to be found in the music-hall alone. In my light-hearted way, I laughed; I thought it was only his fun. But it was not long before I realised the gravity of the communication. Every week has added to the cloud of witnesses on Mr. Moore's side; every month has increased their confidence, one might almost say their truculence. The theatre! Pah! 'tis not to be named with patience! Events which some of us mistook for signs of life, such as the production of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, *The Case of Rebellious Susan*, or *Becket*, were merely nauseous symptoms of decomposition. To take the slightest pleasure or admit the faintest interest in these things was simply to write yourself down illiterate, if not imbecile. On the other hand, a new "turn" at the Empire or the Pavilion, Miss Marie Lloyd's or Mr. Dan Leno's latest song, a novel kick or wriggle by some short-skirted *chanteuse excentrique*, became matters of national moment, to be gravely chronicled and learnedly discussed. The music-

hall critic is now quite as indispensable to any self-respecting paper as the musical or dramatic critic, and is indeed a vastly superior person. The average dramatic critic is of very common journalistic clay, and is apt to live a humdrum suburban and domestic life. Your typical music-hall chronicler is a young blood more or less fresh from the University, who probably has chambers in Piccadilly.

Pray do not imagine that I am out of sympathy with the habit of mind which finds entertainment in the garish patch-work of the Palace of Varieties, and cannot endure the restraint and comparative monotony of all theatrical performances, the long-drawn pretentiousness and ineptitude of some. I myself am frequently conscious of a music-hall mood, when I would much rather see a few turns at the Tivoli or Royal than sit out a dull drama or duller farce. This mood is not difficult of analysis, and one can easily understand that in some people, even of education and intelligence, it should become chronic. It is not the "music-hall habit" that I am criticising, but the fashion of elevating that habit into a virtue, and reinforcing it with an exaggerated and aggressive contempt for the stage. One gets a little tired, in the long run, of the cant—yes, I repeat it, the cant—about art in the music-halls. The "art" of the music-halls is like the "science" of pugilism—a mere

figure of speech. There are scores of "clever people" on the music-hall stage, and some are much cleverer than others. But at the very best their cleverness is restricted, monotonous, and trivial, if not ignoble. Talk of the mannerisms of actors! The music-hall "artiste" is an incarnate mannerism. His or her success lies in working-up to their highest potency a few tricks and mannerisms of vocalisation and expression, till their sheer grotesqueness becomes magnetic. When once these tricks are fully developed, the "art" of the "artiste" is like that of the organette, into which you insert, from time to time, a fresh strip of perforated paper, and then turn the handle.

To me, I own, by far the most satisfactory portion of the average variety-show is the tumbling, juggling, and wire-dancing, the feats of acrobats and of performing animals. These are always curious, often marvellous, sometimes very beautiful. Then there are a few vocalists whose diction and whose rhythmic sense do really bring them within the sphere of art. They possess a very limited power, too often applied to very despicable ends; but being able to do well certain things which are not in themselves un-beautiful, they may in so far claim to rank not only as "artistes" but artists. For the rest, the art of the music-hall is the art of elaborate ugliness, blatant vulgarity, alcoholic humour, and rancid sentiment.

It does not really mirror or interpret any side of life whatever. It exhibits the life of the rich as one long rowdy swagger, the life of the poor as a larky, beery, maudlin Bank Holiday. Oh, the appalling monotony of the topics treated by the music-hall poet! Oh, the narrowness of his vision, the insincerity of his pathos, his patriotism, his morality, even his immorality! It is a significant, not to say a terrible, fact that of the 50,000 songs (at a low estimate) which must have been written for the variety-shows during the half-century of their existence, not one song, not one verse, not one line, has passed into the common stock of the language; or, if any exceptions can be cited, they are of American, not British, origin. This whole literature has vanished "into the Ewigkeit," leaving behind it a few isolated scraps of slang, probably not invented by the lyrists themselves, but fixed in the popular memory by the momentary vogue of the songs in which they occurred. Such, for instance, is the term "Jingo." The music-halls have produced no rhymers of the calibre of Mr. Gilbert or Mr. "Adrian Ross," much less a poet comparable to Burns or Béranger. They have given us no humorist like John Parry or the late Mr. Corney Grain. They have impressed no permanent character-type, like Mrs. Gamp, or Mulvaney, or even "Ally Sloper," on the popular imagination. Was there ever in the world such a gigantic mass of effort, in the direction of

literature and art, so hopelessly ephemeral and negligible in its results?

The curious thing is that the educated fanatics of the variety-show admit all this readily enough, when you catch them singly. They have a hearty contempt for the greater part of the music-hall entertainment; indeed, they resort to the variety-shows for the very purpose of luxuriating in that emotion. It is precisely the vulgarity and inanity of the "comedians" and "serio-comics" and "song-and-dance artistes" that attracts them to these halls of dazzling light. Now, I am far from condemning or scoffing at this attitude of mind. It is perfectly natural and perfectly legitimate. The vulgarity of other people, besides being often amusing in itself, ministers to our sense of superiority. At the music-hall we can be both vulgar and refined at the same moment. We can enjoy what is low and despicable with an added zest of condescension. Which of us is not conscious, now and then, of this *nostalgie de la boue*? Some are a little ashamed of it, others are not; with some it is intermittent, with others chronic. Personally, I have no more objection to it than to any other of the lower human instincts—only I fail to see that it constitutes either a moral virtue or an intellectual distinction. Nor can I see why performances which are individually more or less despicable should become admirable artistic achievements when regarded in bulk. The zealots of the

music-hall ought at least to apply the same principle to the stage, and, while contemning, from their exalted standpoint, individual authors and actors, ought to regard the theatre in general as the nursery of a great and vital art.

The truth is, that we have all, play-lovers and "turn"-lovers alike, an irresistible tendency to make our tastes flatter our vanity. "We needs must love the highest when we see it;" and it follows (does it not?) that what we happen to love must be, by the eternal laws of the universe, the thing best worth loving. I am far from contending that we theatre-lovers are absolutely right and the fanatics of the variety-show absolutely wrong. Analyse their proclivity and you find it quite rational and comprehensible—more so, perhaps, than our mania for the theatre. All I suggest is, that they might live and let live, recognising that it is not a love of "art," in any rational sense of the term, but simply a love of physical comfort and mental idleness, that draws them to the music-hall. There is far more "art"—a far more highly-skilled and intelligent adaptation of means to an end—in acting of ordinary competence than in the cleverest performances the English music-hall stage can show.

XVI.

"L'ŒUVRE."

3rd April.

IT was not without misgiving—shall I confess it?—that I looked forward to the performances of the "Théâtre de l'Œuvre" at the Opera Comique.* Ibsen's tears did not inspire me with confidence. Tears are, after all, an ambiguous tribute from an author to his interpreters. It seemed to me quite possible that Ibsen might reverse the verbs in Byron's famous Byronism, saying:

" And if I weep at any mortal thing,
'Tis that I may not laugh."

Besides, Ibsen was in such a case obviously the one critic from whom sincerity could not possibly be expected; so that even a tear-stained eulogy under his own hand and seal would scarcely have convinced me. Some Danish criticisms of the company which I had seen were unemotional to the point of frigidity; and being under the prevailing delusion that the performers were mainly amateurs—— In brief, I had my misgivings. The first act of *Rosmersholm* was sufficient to dissipate them. Not that I would

* Eight performances in all: March 25 and 28, *Rosmersholm* and *L'Intruse*; March 26 and 29, *Pélléas et Mélisande*; March 27 and 30, *Solness le Constructeur*. Matinées: March 27, *Rosmersholm* and *L'Intruse*; March 30, *Solness*.

use this confession of scepticism as a spring-board from which to leap to the heights of panegyric. I cannot precisely mingle my tears with Ibsen's, but I can quite understand that it must have given him real pleasure to see his creations thus enthusiastically studied and intelligently interpreted by artists, not only of another nationality, but of alien and almost antagonistic race and temperament. The performances of *Rosmersholm* and *The Master Builder* were altogether competent and sympathetic, full of excellent intentions, and not without moments of highly successful realisation. They did not, I own, take hold of me very deeply. They interested, and often satisfied, my critical faculties; they did not stir my emotions—or, if they did, it was indirectly, through the reminiscences they aroused. The action never gripped me and carried me away, as the most familiar play of Ibsen's scarcely ever fails to do. This was mainly, I believe, because of the language. Count Prozor's translations seemed to me very correct, and not infelicitous, except in a few passages of *The Master Builder*, that most difficult of all Ibsen's plays, which had proved even more intractable in French than in English. It was not, then, on the whole, that I felt the translations inadequate: it was simply that, with the familiar rhythms, whether of the English or the Norwegian, I felt that some of the spirit had departed. Other people, I find, were

differently affected. In listening to Ibsen's dialogue in French they escaped that sense of strangeness which was apt to disturb them in English performances. This was quite natural: strange things sound less strange in a strange language. But to me the things themselves were not strange at all; it was only the new language that brought with it incongruous associations. My mind was perpetually occupied in searching for the Teutonic equivalents, English or Norwegian, of the Latin phrases that fell upon my ear; consequently I could not quite yield myself up to the spell of the poet's invention. This was no fault, of course, either of the translator or of the actors; I am merely explaining why I cannot write of the performances with the enthusiasm which springs from spontaneous, irresistible enjoyment. Defects of mounting, too, could not but jar here and there, and, still more, defects of stage-management. It cannot be sufficiently impressed on every one who has to do with the staging of Ibsen's plays, that every departure from his minute and careful instructions is a departure for the worse. I have learned this by repeated experience. Ibsen knows the stage—at any rate, his own stage—as no one else does, and actors who cannot follow out his directions condemn their own art. In *Rosmersholm* especially the French actors, to my great surprise, carried to excess that tendency to “break up the scenes” by irrelevant

wanderings about the stage which one has so often had to struggle against in English rehearsals. Finally, to complete the list of drawbacks to my perfect appreciation of the performances, it so happened that *Rosmersholm* and *The Master Builder* were precisely the plays in which, to my thinking, the essentially poetic talent of Miss Elizabeth Robins had achieved its finest successes. Mlle. Mellot as Rebecca, and Mlle. Despres as Hilda, were heavily handicapped in having to contend against reminiscences of Miss Robins's subtly imaginative rendering of the one part, her radiant creation of the other. Both actresses showed ability and accomplishment. Mlle. Mellot's somewhat sultry beauty and commanding presence were combined with an excellent dramatic method, founded on, yet not slavishly copied from, that of Sarah Bernhardt. The writers who could take this lady for an amateur are curiously at the mercy of their preconceptions. Her rendering of Rebecca was straightforward, vigorous, intelligent. The outlines were all there; and this bold, firm sketch in black and white has, it appears, thrown new light upon the character in the eyes of some critics. I am in the peculiar position of not requiring new light, and looking rather for half-tints, complexities, and, above all, an atmosphere of poetry. Mlle. Despres had many qualifications for the part of Hilda—youth, freshness, vivacity, and a perfect knowledge of the

stage. She was Hilda translated into everyday prose—the *gamine* Hilda of *The Lady from the Sea* rather than the Valkyrie Hilda of *The Master Builder*. M. Lugné-Poë, too, seemed to be at pains to prosaïse the part of Solness. There was an idea, and an excellent idea, in his conception of the part: he rightly sought to emphasise the imperious will, the compulsive magnetism of the man; but why he should have gone out of his way to make him so ugly and common was more than I could understand. At many points, in the first act especially, he bore a grotesque resemblance to Got as M. Poirier. Since these actors have visited Norway, they ought to have unlearned their apparently fixed idea that a goatee beard is the only wear in those latitudes, and that the typical Norwegian is not to be distinguished from a Vermont Yankee. M. Poë, moreover, picked out his face with red in a way which suggested that the Master Builder had been seeking Dutch courage for his struggle with the younger generation. Nevertheless, the impersonation was a remarkable one, and well worth study. Now and again, as the action proceeded, I caught an echo of those “harps in the air” which the poet has set thrilling through this strange emotional symphony; but I could not help feeling that the whole performance went far to excuse M. Sarcey’s inability to make head or tail of the play. It was all too much on one level. I missed what

may be called the due phrasing of the action—the rhythm of its emotional development was not sufficiently accentuated. The performance of *Rosmersholm* was much better in this respect; and here M. Poë was fortunately not tempted to disguise the remarkable beauty and distinction of his face and bearing. He played the gentle, dreamy Rosmer very ably and sympathetically.

The presentation of Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* was even more interesting, because more novel, than the Ibsen experiments. (I pass over *L'Intruse*—frankly, it ought to have been better done, or not at all.) M. Maeterlinck has invented, or at any rate perfected (for he calls M. Charles Van Lerberghe his master), a new and very beautiful method of dramatic expression. Perhaps "expression" is scarcely the word, for the peculiarity of the method is that nothing is fairly and squarely expressed. Language is in M. Maeterlinck's hands quite literally the veil of thought and emotion, revealing through concealment; so that the film of gauze interposed, at the Opera Comique, between the audience and the stage had a symbolic as well as a picturesque value. Very seldom, except in passages of impersonal moralising, do his characters give direct utterance to what they are thinking and feeling. Often, indeed, they could not if they would, for they do not themselves realise what is passing in their hearts. The poet's art lies in

so working on our imagination that, through their seemingly irrelevant and sometimes even trivial babble, we divine more than they could possibly tell us if they "unpacked their heart with words." We have all felt the charm of this method in reading *La Princesse Maleine*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and *La Mort de Tintagiles*; it remained to be seen whether the charm would be enhanced or impaired by stage presentation. That it is, or might be, enhanced, the performance of *Pelléas et Mélisande* left no doubt. The poet's exquisitely cadenced prose, recited, or rather intoned, by Mlle. Mellot as Pelléas, Mlle. Despres as Mélisande, and M. Poë as Golaud, fell like music on the ear; and the subdued passion, the mysterious horror, of the more tragic scenes produced a poignant effect. I am old-fashioned enough to see no reason why the eye should not be gratified in such a performance as well as the ear and the mind. Dimness of atmosphere is all very well, but dinginess seems unnecessary; and M. Poë's taste in costume (for the dresses were of his own designing) appeared to me fearful and wonderful. But it would be no less unjust than ungrateful to quarrel with M. Poë because of the scantiness of the material means at his disposal. We owe to the Théâtre de l'Œuvre, and indirectly to our own indomitable Independent Theatre, a new artistic sensation.

P.S.—I learn on good authority that to the later

performances of *Solness le Constructeur* many of the above criticisms were no longer applicable. M. Poë, for example, had modified his make-up, and dispensed with the goatee and the lines of red about his face. He acted, too, with more distinction and more decision, being independent of the prompter, who was distractingly in evidence on Wednesday evening.

XVII.

THE MAETERLINCK WEEK.

The New Budget, 4th April.

LAST week, in the theatrico-literary world, deserves to be remembered as the Maeterlinck Week. It has set us all testing our early estimates of Maeterlinck, and testing them—I was going to say in the fierce light of the stage, but that stereotype is quite inapplicable to the case of *Pelléas et Mélisande* as performed by the “Théâtre de l’Œuvre.” In the mystic gloom of the theatre, then, we have, as Mr. Saintsbury would say, corrected our impressions of the Flemish poet’s art; and the corrections have been all to his advantage.

“Those like him now who liked him not before,
And those who loved him well now love him more.”

Many of us, too, have seen the poet in the flesh, and have found him no posing coterie-Colossus, but a

simple, natural, melancholy mortal, who happens to have devised a singularly beautiful and poignantly dramatic form of expression for his overmastering sense of the strangeness and pathos of man's little life in the midst of the Immensities. To say that this is the burden of M. Maeterlinck's message is as much as to say that it is not for the vulgar ear. Least of all is it for the ear of the average theatrical audience, or of those writers who make themselves, by instinct and habit, the mouthpieces of that compact majority. Among those, on the other hand, who have been endowed with the poetic and metaphysic sense, there has been but one voice, not only as to the exquisite beauty of M. Maeterlinck's drama, but as to its essential fitness for stage presentation. On that point, however, I think there are some distinctions to be drawn. I even go the length of suspecting some of my most esteemed colleagues of a little amiable affectation in persuading themselves that they were quite satisfied with *Pelléas et Mélisande* as presented by M. Lugné-Poë's company.

Whether by chance or by design, the stage-arrangements of "L'Œuvre" were practically those of the Elizabethan theatre. Changes of scene were indicated by the drawing forwards or backwards of a pair of curtains hung about midway up the stage—"traverses" they were called in Shakespeare's time. The whole stage, with the traverses opened, indicated

an "exterior"; the front stage, with the traverses closed, stood for an "interior." True, there was some attempt at painting both on the back-cloth and the traverses, but it was so indistinct in the dim light as to represent nothing at all, and to produce very much the effect of the arras hangings behind which Burbage-Hamlet killed Polonius. A sheet of green gauze was stretched across the proscenium-opening; the footlights were extinguished: what light there was upon the stage came from the wings. A few rough properties (again as in the Elizabethan times) were occasionally thrust upon the scene—a big box or tank represented the two fountains which figure in the play, and a little canvas "flat," not unlike the front of a Punch-and-Judy show, did duty for the castle wall pierced by Mélisande's window. The dresses—such of them as were distinguishable—"looked," says Mr. Walkley, "like the attempts of a child to imitate mediæval costume with scraps of mamma's old gowns." Mdlle. Mellot, as Pélleas, wore a bunchy crimson blouse, chocolate-coloured trunks (at least so it seemed to me), and what looked like grey worsted tights. A more ungraceful and un-masculine figure could scarcely be conceived. Mdlle. Despres, as Mélisande, wore a gown of clinging flesh-colour, with a broad selvage and train of maroon or dark purple. There was nothing, absolutely nothing, to give pleasure to the eye in the dingy spectacle.

But (I may be told) it is not a "spectacle" at all. It does not appeal to the eye, but to the ear and the imagination. Are the ear and the imagination, then, more effectually stimulated because the eye is starved and even offended? Not a bit of it! The ideal presentation should be one in which ear and eye should take consentaneous delight, each in its due degree. And M. Poë knows this as well as any one. He *does* appeal to the eye, and (details apart) in the right way, but with very inadequate means. The gauze film (which should, however, be woven without seams) is an excellent idea. The crepuscular and Rembrandtesque effects are entirely in the spirit of the poem—if only they in any degree realised their intention. The fact simply is that a very poor and struggling artistic organisation has to attempt, with its meagre resources, a task which would tax the ingenuity of Professor Herkomer, even with Mr. Irving's cheque-book to back it. By all means let us admire and encourage the enthusiasm which inspires M. Poë's enterprise. Let us admit with gratitude that his appeal to the ear is entirely successful, and that it is a joy to hear Maeterlinck's "fragile word-music," as Mr. Shaw happily puts it, so delicately and sympathetically treated. But do not let us elevate into a principle, and pretend to admire for its own sake, that poverty, one might almost say that squalor, of scenic apparatus, which is not really due to the austerity of

M. Poë's taste, but to the slenderness of his purse. Better fine recitation and bad mounting than (what we are accustomed to on the English stage) splendid mounting and execrable recitation. Better dinginess, if you will, than vulgar and garish display. But best of all the harmonious art-work which ministers, in their fitting measure, to all the æsthetic faculties at once.

"Maeterlinck," say Mr. Shaw, Mr. Walkley, and others, "is delightful on the stage. Representation throws into relief his poetic and dramatic qualities." On the other hand, M. Maeterlinck himself confesses that he takes no pleasure in performances of his works; and Jules Lemaître, in reviewing his *Trois Petits Drames pour Marionnettes*, strongly deprecates all "indiscrètes et forcément grossières tentatives de représentation par de misérables comédiens en chair et en os." The Opera Comique performances leave me halting between the two opinions. They proved the possibility of truly delightful stage-renderings of these fascinating works; but they scarcely realised the possibility. They set me pining to be a millionaire, that I might, at my own private theatre, mount *La Princesse Maleine* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* as they ought to be mounted. Give me a roomy stage, four or five thousand pounds, and the company of "L'Œuvre" slightly strengthened and amended, and I will put on these two plays (or perish in the attempt)

in such a way as to make M. Maeterlinck realise and rejoice in his own stage-craft, and to wring from M. Jules Lemaître a contrite apology to the "miserable flesh-and-blood actors." Can any one read *Pelléas et Mélisande* without longing for the ocular realisation of the exquisite series of pictures it contains? Of course, the methods of the Lyceum and the Théâtre-Français are quite inapplicable. One would have practically to invent new methods of scene-painting and stage-lighting. But it is precisely the novelty of the attempt that should render it, as Hilda Wangel would say, "frightfully thrilling"—or, in French, "très-émotionnant."

We ought not to take too literally M. Maeterlinck's description of his pieces as puppet-plays. There is, to say the least of it, a dash of symbolism in the designation. It indicates the poet's extra-mundane point of view. Endowed in the very highest degree with what may be called cosmic imagination, he regards the life of man from an infinite aloofness, and sees how small a part is played by the vaunted human will in the drama of the planet. The tendency of all his thought is to minimise the operation of the will—that is why some people, vaguely realising that morality rests on the hypothesis of free-will, call his work morbid and immoral. He sees mankind as a company of puppets, dancing on an infinitesimal stage in an obscure corner of the universe, while Nature pipes

the music and Destiny pulls the strings. It is primarily in this sense that his pieces may be called "drames pour marionettes," or, as Lemaître puts it, "de l'Eschyle pour *pupazzi* malades." Now M. Poë has shown that this philosophical point of view may be illustrated just as well by flesh-and-blood actors as by marionettes. His company realised to perfection the idea of will-less creatures moving through a dream.

For a further analysis of M. Maeterlinck's talent I must refer the reader to an admirable essay in Jules Lemaître's *Impressions de Théâtre*, eighth series. On one point, however, M. Lemaître has not quite grasped the poet's intention. He describes *La Mort de Tintagiles* as "simply the story of the assassination of a young prince"; whereas M. Maeterlinck assures me that he designed it as an allegory of the death of a child, and that the iron door against which poor Ygraine hurls herself so ineffectually symbolises the portals of the tomb. It is with reference to this door that M. Lemaître quotes Victor Hugo's saying that "there is nothing so interesting as a wall behind which we know that something is happening." "This tragic wall," M. Lemaître continues, "appears in all M. Maeterlinck's poems; or, if it is not a wall, it is a door; and if it is not a door, it is a curtained window." I think he might have carried the idea further, and shown that the greater part of M. Maeterlinck's dialogue possesses the fascination of "a wall behind

which we know that something is happening." His characters very seldom give direct utterance to what is passing in their minds. They talk of everything else in the world, and, by the aid of an indefinable, elusive symbolism which is the poet's peculiar secret, we are enabled to divine more than they know themselves of their innermost emotions. In this art of adumbration M. Maeterlinck possesses an astonishing mastery.

And just in this (I intend no paradox) our symbolist is often more real than the realists. He knows, as the Old Man says in *Intérieur*, that "it is in the soul that things happen," and that the most poignant dramas are not those which come to the surface in words. This is, on the whole, an inarticulate world. Comparatively few real-life dramas work themselves out in analytic scenes, like those of *Rosmersholm*, or *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*. We may not, indeed, talk of swans, and cypresses, and fountains, and forests, and nightingales; but we babble of the influenza and the Speakership, and the Boat-race, and bi-metallism, and the *Yellow Book*, while passion is seething in our veins or remorse gnawing at our heart-strings. It is true that in our small-talk we do not consciously symbolise our great emotions; yet who knows but that a higher intelligence might be able to divine even in the chatter of an afternoon "at home" the inmost secrets of the assembled puppet-souls?

M. Maeterlinck, at any rate, knows how to make reticence voluble. He is the poet not only of willlessness, but of wordlessness. His most characteristic scenes remind me of the refrain of a little song which occurs (I think) in James Albery's *Apple Blossoms*:—

"Nothing said, yet all was told,
When the year was growing old."

It seems to be always autumn in M. Maeterlinck's world.

XVIII.

"THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME."

17th April.

"THE Girls they Took Around with Them" would have been an apter title for the new Adelphi drama than *The Girl I Left Behind Me*.^{*} The U.S. Army, according to Messrs. Franklin Fyles and David Belasco, is the most amatory army on record—I mean, of course, in a quite idyllic and virtuous way. If our army had flirted as terribly in Flanders as did these gallant troops in Montana—you may accent the "gallant" in either way—I fear "Malbrouk s'en

* April 13—August 10.

va-t-en guerre" would have had to be sung to a different tune. Post Kennion is as full of love and rumours of love as a young ladies' boarding-school. When one of the Lieutenants is engaged to the General's daughter, the whole regiment is paraded on congratulation-duty; and, after deputing the other Lieutenant to express their heartfelt sentiments, the brave fellows proceed to strew the lovers' path with flowers. Unfortunately the General's daughter (who is the General's General, and commands the fort) has engaged herself to the wrong Lieutenant, the villain and dastard, who has in bygone days seduced and deserted the Major's wife—but that is practically another story. The right Lieutenant, the Bayard of the Backwoods, has a silent sorrow in his soul, for he loves the General's daughter. She, you may be sure, is far from insensible to his merits; but her troth is plighted, and there is nothing to be done. Then the right Lieutenant and the wrong 'un ride off together a-scouting; the villain commits an act of cowardice, of which he accuses the hero; and the General, like the ninny he is, believes him. Not so the General's daughter. In order to vindicate her hero's courage, she sends him on a forlorn hope, to bring succour to the beleaguered fort; and the situation is a good one after its kind, and deserved the tumultuous applause which greeted it. A forlorn hope, in military melodrama, is, of course, the safest of services;

and just as the stockade is being carried, and the General is preparing to shoot his daughter, to save her from the clutches of the redskins, the right Lieutenant rushes in at the head of the rescuing party, and all is well. It takes another act, or, rather, two minutes of another act, finally to baffle the villain—the rest of the act being given up to the flirtations of the two pairs of comic lovers, all conducted with the strictest propriety, under the fatherly eye of the General. By way of showing that we are in a democratic country, the right Lieutenant's pretty sister makes love to a handsome private in her brother's company. In the stockade scene, when the danger is at its height, the General's daughter bids the handsome private keep watch over the slumbers of his lady-love. The wrong Lieutenant orders him to some other and less agreeable duty, and the private declines to obey, on the plea that he cannot desert the post assigned him by the heroine. The General intervenes in the dispute with delicate tact, suggests a compromise, and then gives the Lieutenant a mild reproof for wanting to tear a soldier away from his sleeping sweetheart. "Forty years in the army," says the doughty old warrior, "have taught me that a loyal lover is bound to be a good soldier." And that is the moral of the play. "It is a standing rule at the Admiralty," says Sir Joseph Porter in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, "that love levels

all ranks." In the U.S. Army, it at any rate justifies a full private in disobeying his lieutenant's orders. But perhaps that is only if the lieutenant happens to be a villain.

The play is short, crisp, and amusing. The comic scenes have evidently lost some of their savour in crossing the Atlantic; but the serious scenes are comic enough, in all conscience. For my part, I like the American national airs and the blue uniforms—I can always pass a happy evening under the Star-Spangled Banner. But there is one point at which I wanted to hiss, and which I do hereby hiss very heartily. The Indian chief's daughter, Fawn, of course loves the right Lieutenant with a dog-like devotion, and consequently sides with the pale-faces. She has done them several services, and at last steals into the stockade to tell them (what she fully believes to be true) that the Lieutenant has been killed. Would you believe that the good old General treats her as a hostage, and tells her father that he will shoot her if the attack on the fort be not discontinued? Even if she were a prisoner of war, this would be a barbarous enough proceeding. But she is practically on the footing of a guest, and even of a benefactress. She has come of her own free will, to render a last service to her pale-face friends. "It is to save our own women," the General may say; but if the women were worth saving, they would

insist on being tomahawked and all the rest of it, ten times over, rather than buy their safety by even the threat of so abominable a crime. Certainly this is a case in which the good old Adelphi maxim about the man who lays his hand upon a woman, save in the way of kindness, might with advantage be recalled to the memory of General Kennion of the U.S. Army.

The hero, heroine, and villain are played as usual by Mr. Terriss, Miss Millward, and Mr. Abingdon. Mr. F. H. Macklin is good as the General, and Mr. Charles Fulton excellent as the Major. One pair of comic lovers is pleasantly played by Mr. G. W. Cockburn and Miss Hope Dudley, the other pair is less happily treated by Mr. E. W. Gardiner and Miss Marie Montrose. The reception of the play was most enthusiastic.

XIX.

"FANNY"—"DELIA HARDING"—"THE LADIES'
IDOL"—"THE SHOP-GIRL."

24th April.

A RIDICULOUS rumour got abroad some time ago to the effect that a new Censor had been appointed in the room of the late Mr. Pigott. The details of the

story were quite preposterous. No one had ever seen or heard of the alleged Mr. Radford or Romford—I forget the exact name—it was obviously borrowed from some novel of Anthony Trollope's or Mr. James Payn's. The details of his career which went the rounds of the papers were patently mythical—the bald inventions of baffled reporters. I was sceptical from the first as to the existence of this impalpable personality, this "*parvi nominis umbra*"; and the portrait which was ultimately palmed off on some confiding editors as that of the new Censor redoubled my doubts. It had exactly the air of a composite photograph, the generalised type of, say, a hundred ordinary middle-class Englishmen. It was simply "*Monsieur Tout-le-Monde*," the quintessentiated Man-in-the-Street. However, I clearly discerned a politic design in this daring personification; so I held my peace. The powers that be, I thought, realise the absurdity and futility of the office, but are prudently disinclined to incur the responsibility of formally abolishing it. Even the wisest and most necessary reform (they probably reflected) is always attended by a certain temporary disturbance in the even tenor of affairs. The open and definite suppression of the Censorship might lead to a spasmodic outbreak of licence on the one hand, of Puritanism on the other. Let us, then, simply leave the office in abeyance, appointing a Mrs. Harris, like the

"Tulchan Bishops" of Scottish history, to draw the fees (for plays are luxuries, and it is bad political economy to remit a tax on luxuries), but practically leaving playwrights and managers to their own devices. Thus argued (I imagine) the authorities at St. James's; and though I am personally no lover of compromise, I did not feel it incumbent on me to cry, with Mrs. Prig, "I don't believe there's no sich person!"

But the secret is a secret no longer, so why make a pretence of keeping it up? Messrs. George R. Sims and Cecil Raleigh, men of critical and penetrating intelligence, were not to be deceived by the officially-promulgated myth. Like myself, they were at once convinced of the non-entity (I use the term in its literal sense) of the alleged Censor; and I am sorry to have to reproach them with taking an unfair advantage of their superior insight. In order, no doubt, to explode the myth, they made all haste to write a farce, *Fanny*,* which even the lamented Mr. Pigott, indulgent as he always was to frivolity, could not possibly have passed. It is very difficult to relate in printable terms the imbroglio of the second act, but I must make the attempt. A. and B. have just been married when A. learns that a former wife of his is not dead, so that his marriage is bigamous. C. and D. are not married at all, but are mistaken for man and wife by the mistress of the country house

* Strand Theatre, April 15—June 1.

where the action passes, and, for reasons of their own, cannot undeceive her. The whole humour, then, of the latter half of the second act lies in the fact that these two couples, one unmarried and the other only nominally married, are each assigned a single sleeping-apartment; and the great effect upon which the authors (quite justly) relied is the bringing in of the two bedroom candles. The men (and this, I suppose, is what saves the "morality" of the farce) are not in the least inclined to take advantage of the position, and the "fun" consists chiefly of their excuses for sitting up all night. At last a supposed burglary provides them with the necessary pretext; and in the morning, when the bride innocently asks them whether it was quite necessary for them to keep guard all night, one of them replies, with a sly glance at the audience, "Oh, yes; it would never have done to go to bed under the circumstances." Now, I submit to Messrs. Sims and Raleigh that this is not playing quite fair. They should have taken some other way of proving the non-existence of the censorship. Though they, and I, and a few other discerning persons, may have seen through the official hocus-pocus, the general public still believes in the mythical "Examiner of Plays," and consequently feels itself exempt from all responsibility in respect to the morals of the stage. If the censorship had been openly and formally abolished, there would

certainly have been some protest, from the better part of the audience, against such witless and vulgar tomfoolery. It is only because the propriety of this stuff is supposed to have been officially guaranteed by the chief officer of Her Majesty's household that it passes muster with decent people. Messrs. Sims and Raleigh, then, take advantage at once of the non-existence of the Censor and the non-existence of any public sense of responsibility—a course of action which is not, I think, quite worthy of them. *Fanny* is not without a certain ingenuity, like that of a third-rate French vaudeville; and, being played with unflagging spirit by Messrs. Shine, Day, and Harwood, Miss Alma Stanley, Miss May Whitty, and Miss Lydia Cowell, it succeeds in keeping the audience amused. But I wish the public-spirited authors had chosen some wittier method of demolishing the Censor legend.

Some people, I find, profess themselves unconvinced, even by *Fanny*, that the censorship has been left in abeyance. They actually believe in the corporeal existence of a Mr. Redford—that they declare to be his name. "Wait," they say, "until some one writes a serious play, with any sort of originality in it, and you'll soon see whether there's a Censor or not." Well, absolute negation is unphilosophical—that I understand to be one of the main *Foundations of Belief*. There may be a Mr.

Redford at St. James's, and there may be Mahatmas in Tibet. But I think all available evidence points in the opposite direction.

If I were to say all I think about the conduct of M. Sardou in letting such a play as *Delia Harding** go forth from his workshop, I should probably receive a polite invitation from two of his friends to step across to Ostend and make his personal acquaintance at the distance of ten paces. But it is really we who are insulted. M. Sardou evidently thinks that anything is good enough for England and America, and has given us the dregs of his invention. The puzzle is how Mr. Comyns Carr ever came to produce such a play. Were it not for the remarkable and tasteful liberality of the setting he has given it, one might conclude that he had somehow bought a pig in a poke, and, relying on the name of Sardou, placed himself under contract to produce the piece before he had seen the manuscript. But if that were the case, if he did not himself believe in it, he would scarcely have cast it so well and mounted it so elaborately. The whole affair is a mystery—how a playwright of reputation could sell such a play, and how a manager of tact and experience could buy it. Even in the 'seventies, at the height of the Sardou mania, *Delia Harding* could not have succeeded. To-day, it is simply an abortive anachronism. If a

* Comedy Theatre, April 17—May 17.

clever and somewhat malicious parodist had set himself to caricature the methods and mannerisms of the author of *Les Pattes de Mouche* and *Dora*, he could scarcely have produced a crueller travesty than this. It has every one of Sardou's weaknesses—ready-made and bran-stuffed characters, false heroisms, ridiculous reticences, an abuse of coincidence, incessant juggling with letters and telegrams—and it has little or none of his characteristic ingenuity and deftness. The bare-faced audacity with which, having exhausted his original plot at the end of the second act, he tacked on a new and ridiculous poisoning-story to fill up the remaining half-hour, was the last straw which broke down the patience of the audience. Indeed, I was greatly struck throughout by the justness of perception displayed by the pit and gallery. Without being at all noisy or turbulent, they laid their finger, so to speak, on the weakest spots of M. Sardou's fable with unerring instinct. Surely the experience of that evening must have convinced Mr. Carr (if, indeed, he needed convincing) that the day for such mechanical and lifeless yarn-spinning is past. By far the best things in the play are some of Mr. Carr's own happily-turned sayings in the first act. Miss Marion Terry played her lifeless part with a great deal of charm; Miss Dorothy Dorr made all that was possible of a most impotent and ineffectual traitress; and Miss

Rose Leclercq gave excellent point to the aforesaid witticisms of Mr. Carr's. Some of the audience seemed to have taken a sudden objection to Mr. Fred Terry, who played the hero precisely as he has played a score of other heroes. Mr. Cyril Maude was good as a conventional valetudinarian; and Mr. Mackintosh's highly-coloured portrait of the villain seemed to be founded on the patriotic assumption that all villains are necessarily foreigners. He left the gentleman's nationality vague, but an Englishman he certainly was not.

With *The Ladies' Idol** at the Vaudeville, Mr. Arthur Law takes his place among the playwrights who count. There is real humour in the conception and ingenuity in the execution of this little piece, to which the designation "farcical comedy" is, for once, appropriate. In point of workmanship, it is miles ahead of *The New Boy* or *Charlie's Aunt*, which consist merely in the more or less mechanical elaboration of one grotesque idea. Of course it is the sheer simplicity of their root-ideas that makes the fortune of these two popular absurdities; and it is quite possible that the greater complexity and sobriety of Mr. Law's new invention may render it less attractive than its predecessor. It really belongs rather to the Pinero than to the Brandon Thomas school of farce. The conception of the drawing-room warbler,

* April 18—June 15.

who exploits his romantic reputation in Mayfair in order to return with a good round sum at his bank to the more congenial joys of Brixton and domesticity, is not at all unworthy of Mr. Pinero himself; and the development of the theme, though uneven, abounds in happy touches. The first act is charming; the second is scrappy and flags from time to time; but the third seemed to me to pull together again and to end the play quite satisfactorily. Mr. Law may boast himself the one dramatist who has brought a baby into farce without making it offensive. The writing is bright throughout and occasionally witty. In the third act, Mr. Law got some capital effects out of a sort of counterpoint in dialogue, making two characters, each of whom is absorbed in his own train of thought, and almost entirely regardless of the other, carry on what purports to be a conversation, but is in reality a species of double soliloquy. Mr. Weedon Grossmith is delightful as the Ladies' Idol; Miss May Palfrey plays Dora Vale with humour and tact; Miss Esmé Beringer shows a real gift of comedy in the part of Lady Helen Frant; Mr. John Beauchamp, as Mr. Purley, proves his versatility by a very clever bit of eccentric character-acting; and Mr. C. P. Little is very amusing as Lord Finch Callowdale.

Miss Ellaline Terriss, released from the Lyric, now lends the aid of her almost pathetic prettiness and

charm to *The Shop-Girl** at the Gaiety, playing the title-part. Miss Terriss is not only pretty, but bright and intelligent, and adds substantially to the attractiveness of the entertainment. The piece, by the way, has been relieved of the foolishly offensive lines against which the first-night audience protested—and the Censor didn't.

XX.

“VANITY FAIR”—“THE PASSPORT.”

1st May.

DURING his long period of silence, Mr. G. W. Godfrey has not suffered his wit to rust. Much of the dialogue of *Vanity Fair*† is really clever, and all of it is bright and showy. Moreover, he has provided Mrs. John Wood with a brilliant part, which she plays in a perfect whirlwind of humour and enjoyment. In her own peculiar line of characters, no comic actress of this generation can approach Mrs. John Wood; and Mrs. Brabazon-Tegg, *ci devant* Mrs. James Crump, *alias* Daisy Douglas of the Halls, *née* Jennie Watson of nowhere in particular, is certainly one of

* See *Theatrical World* of 1894, p. 316. Miss Terriss appeared April 15.

† April 27—July 24; September 23—November 2.

the most effective parts that ever fell in her way. With wit and Mrs. John Wood, then, it would be a very difficult audience which could fail to pass a pleasant evening; and, as a matter of fact, Saturday evening at the Court passed pleasantly enough. Personally, indeed, I ought in strict consistency to have been enchanted, for the play came near to realising a favourite ideal or imagination of mine—a dramatised Du Maurier.* The plot was of the meagrest, and was kept discreetly in the background, while the foreground was occupied with ever-shifting groups of Du Maurier or Greiffenhagen figures speaking dialogue which might quite well have been cut up into a series of "legends" for the drawings of these satirists. This is a style of comedy which I have long been advocating; and now that I have got it, why am I not happy? Well, my rapture is tempered by a sense of something factitious and second-hand in Mr. Godfrey's satire. There is little or nothing newly or truly observed in it. Mr. Godfrey has simply made a mosaic of all the current topics of satirical allusion in the comic papers and on the stage. If we could accept *Vanity Fair* as the work of an original observer and thinker, it would be a ferocious indictment of society; and I am far from

* I was here thinking, of course, of Mr. Du Maurier the artist, not of the author of *Trilby*. Mr. Paul Potter's "dramatised Du Maurier" was not yet looming on the horizon.

saying that such an indictment might not be a "true bill." But this is not it. Mr. Godfrey has neither the outlook nor the insight of a Juvenal. He simply follows a satiric fashion, and caricatures (he calls his play a "caricature") not life itself, but other people's caricatures of life. There is nothing easier than to be a little satirist, nothing more difficult than to be a great one; and such a sweeping indictment as Mr. Godfrey brings would have demanded a great satirist to support it. The invective is shrill and insincere—and by "insincere" I do not, of course, mean hypocritical, but unrealised, imitative. We miss the large philosophy of life which ought to lie behind it all. Mr. Godfrey shows no understanding of the essence of the situation, but merely depicts in crude colours some of its surface aspects, seen, as one cannot help suspecting, through other men's eyes. He has produced a piece of brilliant stage-journalism, not of solid dramatic literature.

The title, *Vanity Fair*, is a mistake. Classic titles cannot thus be annexed with impunity. If, henceforth, in mentioning *Vanity Fair* we have always to say "Thackeray's" or "Godfrey's," as the case may be, we may justly resent having this inconvenience forced upon us. If, on the other hand, we feel no necessity for specifying the author, it can only mean that either one *Vanity Fair* or the other has sunk deep into oblivion, and—well, Mr. Godfrey

himself may forecast the probabilities. Mr. Arthur Cecil is good in an ineffective part; Mr. G. W. Anson puts a great deal of colour and conviction into the villain; Miss Granville is charming as the sole female representative of common-sense and decency, but seemed to me now and then to miss the just emphasis of her lines. Other characters are well played by Mr. Sugden, Mr. Wykes, Miss Nancy Noel, and Miss Helena Dacre. The mounting is lavish, and—here I am at the end of my notice without having so much as mentioned Mrs. Brabazon-Tegg's dream of her trial for bigamy, which is the great feature of the third act. It is an old device ingeniously applied to a new end—a trick of melodrama adapted to the purposes of satire. The idea is good, but somehow the effect struck me as scarcely commensurate with the effort. Mr. Godfrey seemed to fall between the two stools of realism and fantasy. His trial scene, though of course far enough from being true to fact, appeared to aim at truth, and was at any rate no more remote from it than the trials we are accustomed to see on the stage. I cannot help thinking that, in a dream, a little freer exercise of fantasy would have been permissible.

There are some exceedingly funny scenes in *The Passport*,* by Messrs. B. C. Stephenson and

* April 25; transferred to Trafalgar Square Theatre, July 29—August 24.

W. Yardley, at Terry's Theatre. The first and third acts especially are full of comic material cleverly worked up. It is a farce of the purely mechanical order, innocent of character, observation, or satire, and relying throughout on a series of wild coincidences and extravagant misunderstandings; but on its own unpretending level it is a competent and effective piece of work. Not having read "Colonel Savage's celebrated novel *My Official Wife*," I do not know what may be the extent of the obligation which the authors confess to it. But in any case it seems to be confined to the first act, and the amazing complications of the second and third acts are understood to be all their own. Miss Gertrude Kingston is quite admirable in the part of a lady with no memory, and Mr. George Giddens, Mr. Alfred Maltby, Mr. Yorke Stephens, Mr. J. L. Mackay, Miss Fanny Coleman, and Miss Cicely Richards all help to make the piece go with the requisite buoyancy and rapidity.

XXI.

"A STORY OF WATERLOO"—"DON QUIXOTE"—
"JOHN-A-DREAMS."

8th May.

THERE was scarcely a dry eye in the Lyceum Theatre* when the curtain fell on *A Story of Waterloo*. Whether mine were among the few or the many, it consists not with the dignity of criticism to say; but this I will say—that at the end of *Don Quixote* it would have taken very little to make me weep, or indulge in some still more unprintable expression of feeling. Never was there such a disappointment as Mr. Irving's performance. Of course the fault was largely our own. Disappointment is correlative with expectation, and Mr. Irving is not responsible for the extravagance of our hopes. But the fact remains that we had hoped great things. We had all been proclaiming for years that Don Quixote was the one character of all others which Mr. Irving was born to incarnate (or should one say "inossify"?), and that

* *A Story of Waterloo* (see *Theatrical World* of 1894, p. 343) and *Don Quixote*, produced May 4, ran till June 1. Between Whitsun Week (June 3) and the end of the season, July 27, these plays were occasionally repeated, and performances were given of *Nance Oldfield*, *The Bells*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Faust*, *Louis XI.*, *Becket*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Charles I.*, *The Lyons Mail*, *The Corsican Brothers*, *King Arthur*, *Macbeth*, and *Journeys End in Lovers Meeting* (see *Theatrical World* of 1894, p. 170).

this creation would be the crown and glory of his career. Mr. Irving himself, it is clear, took a juster view of the matter, else he would not have been content with the single "chapter" of Mr. Wills's work presented on Saturday. He evidently felt no intellectual impulse towards the effort, but was partly goaded into it by our insistence, partly tempted by the convenience of filling up with it an odd corner of a temporary bill. He would have done far, far better to have let it alone, and played Jingle, or Macaire, or Jeremy Diddler, characters in which his peculiar cast of humour pleases many people and hurts no one, dead or alive. His Don Quixote, on the other hand, can please those only who neither know nor care about the Knight of the Rueful Visage, and must hurt, and that very sensibly, all who know and love him. It is strange that Mr. Irving's imagination should fail him so fatally in approaching what seemed so congenial a character. He plays him like a combination of Malvolio and Parolles—Malvolio in his strut, Parolles in his insincerity. He "gives him away" from first to last by aid of farcical whimsies and sidelong glances at the audience. Where is it recorded that Don Quixote used his sword to turn over the pages of *Amadis de Gaul*, or tried to carry a ten-foot lance erect through a seven-foot doorway? Where does Mr. Irving find the catchword, "I say no more—God knows what I mean"? The phrase may doubt-

less occur in Cervantes, but a catchword it is not. What is the authority for the incident of the pump, certainly the most amazing I ever saw on any stage? Don't tell me that these inventions are retained out of piety towards the manes of the late Mr. Wills. Mr. Irving is far above such superstitions; and, in any case, piety towards Mr. Wills would be a poor excuse for impiety towards Cervantes. When there are ten thousand genuine traits and incidents ready to hand if only time and space could be found for them, why take up precious space and time by the interpolation of spurious absurdities? It is as though a jeweller, having all Golconda at command, and only a little ring to set it in, should fill up half the circlet with paste diamonds. But it is not in individual touches and incidents that this Don Quixote chiefly offends; it is in the actor's total and radical misconception of the character. Mr. Irving pitches his Don Quixote throughout in the key of farce; whereas he ought clearly to be a figure of romance, grotesquely habited, and placed in farcical surroundings. His Don Quixote should have been essentially of the kindred of his Charles I. and King Arthur, not of his Jingle and Macaire. Where were the large and magnificent gestures? Where was the high-flown, orotund utterance? Where was the magnanimity? Where the rodomontade? Mr. Irving never moved his arms from his side, except upon compulsion, and he spoke

in a dry, hesitating, mincing, whimsical fashion, without an atom of sonority or conviction. Even in reading his romances, the Don seemed to be critically pondering them, instead of rolling forth their periods with gusto and revelling in great names and greater deeds. Though he had not a dozen sentences to speak, Mr. S. Johnson's Sancho contained far more of the spirit of Cervantes.

This dolorous adventure, however, may not be without its uses. It proved that *Don Quixote* ought never to be attempted on the stage. One realised that even if Mr. Irving's performance had been masterly instead of mistaken, it would still have given more pain than pleasure to those who care anything for the hidalgo of La Mancha. It is not (as one had imagined) the physical difficulties of the theme—the windmills, the sheep, and what Mr. Meredith would call the “thwackings”—that must keep *Don Quixote* remote from the boards; it is the inherent moral cruelty of the fable. The better the Don was acted the more intolerable would the spectacle become. No doubt we have somewhat idealised (or sentimentalised, if you like to put it so) Cervantes' idea. There are many things in the book itself that we wish he had not told, or had told otherwise. That is natural, inevitable. The Don is not of an age, but for all time. He is not one of the characters which we can regard from a merely historic standpoint. We cannot

—we would not if we could—throw ourselves back into a sixteenth-century attitude of mind in contemplating his "faictes et gestes." An ingenious gentleman has lately been enlarging (apropos of *Hamlet*) on the callousness with which our Elizabethan forefathers regarded insanity. The fact is certain, though it is not equally clear what it has to do with the feigned madness of *Hamlet*. On the other hand, it is strictly relevant to the question whether *Don Quixote* could ever be tolerable on the modern stage. Cervantes, or at any rate his contemporaries, found madness as a whole far more frankly ludicrous than we do—they could laugh at it with an easier mind. And here we have no mere commonplace insanity, but the noblest and most lovable madness that can visit mortal brain. Who can bear to see it buffeted, flouted, besmirched, and befooled? We could as soon find amusement in seeing

"From Marlborough's eyes the tears of dotage flow,
And Swift expire, a driveller and a show."

We can read the book with pleasure because (if I may put a foreword to an old proverb) reading is only imagining, seeing is believing. Here is precisely the case to apply the well-worn tag :

"Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus ;"

and one might even read "irritant" in the modern

rather than the classical sense. We may regret, then, for Mr. Irving's sake, that he has made a false step in attempting Don Quixote ; we have not to lament, on our own behalf, that he has missed a great opportunity.

I pass with gladness, with enthusiasm, to *A Story of Waterloo*, of which I said something in December last when Mr. Irving presented it at the Garrick. It bears very well the test of a second seeing. A trifle it is, no doubt ; but a trifle well worth doing, both on the author's part and on the actor's. It must not be subjected, of course, to realistic or anti-idealistic criticism. It is a piece of unblushing idealism—a frank appeal to our most rudimentary emotions. Yet, if there were not a large infusion of truth in this *Arms and the Man's Old Style*, as it might be called—perhaps quite as much of the essential truth as in *Arms and the Man: New Style*—we may be sure it would appeal to our emotions in vain. Dr. Conan Doyle, in a word, has shown himself a true humorist, and has provided Mr. Irving with his very best character-part, a genuine creation. It is, perhaps, unnecessarily ugly, especially in its vocal manifestations. The inarticulate moans and whines in which the actor indulges seem to me overdone—not from the point of view of nature, but from that of art. In studying an essentially painful phenomenon, such as senility, the artist should be not

only permitted but enjoined to choose, out of many possible cases, one of the less repulsive rather than one of the more—except when repulsiveness happens to be of the essence of the dramatic problem, as in this instance it is not. Corporal Gregory would certainly be none the less impressive for being a shade less grotesque; but otherwise Mr. Irving's performance is altogether masterly in its high elaboration and admirably un-self-conscious humour and pathos. It is a piece of acting no one can afford to miss.

Mr. Beerbohm Tree on his return from America, with the laurels of Boston yet green on his brow, has resumed the interrupted run of *John-a-Dreams*,* that "owdacious" work (as Corporal Brewster would say) which frightened the *Times* from its propriety. Mrs. Tree now wears the frayed garment of Kate Cloud, in lieu of Mrs. Patrick Campbell, and wears it very prettily. She acts the part with sincerity and skill, if only she could get a little variety into the monotonous plaintiveness of her voice. For the rest, the cast remains almost unaltered, except that Miss Lily Hanbury now plays Mrs. Wanklyn intelligently and pleasantly, but without Miss Janette Steer's peculiar fitness for the part. I am sorry to note, by-the-by, that Mr. Herbert Ross now grossly overdoes his sketch of Percy de Coburn, which so delighted us on the first night.

* May 2—May 22.

XXII.

"THE HOME SECRETARY."

15th May.

HARD measure, as it seems to me, has been meted out to *The Home Secretary** at the Criterion. It has not been accepted for what it is, but attacked for what it is not. Its unreality and improbability have been dwelt upon, as though it in any way pretended to be real or probable. Mr. Carton has chosen to write a romance, and, instead of asking ourselves whether it is spirited and entertaining, we ask him, with asperity, what he means by writing a romance at all. Why look for qualities which the author renounces in the very title of his play? If he had aimed at an effect of reality, had wanted to "take us in" for a single moment, he would never have chosen a notoriously non-existent hero, and presented a set of events which, if they had ever happened, must necessarily be familiar to all of us, at least in outline. We allow the privileges of romance to the novelist; why should we deny them to the playwright? Mr. Anthony Hope, for instance, wishing to amuse our idleness with a tale of mystery, intrigue, and heroism, invents a kingdom and a royal family, pedigree and

* May 7—July 20. Reproduced at Shaftesbury Theatre, October 21—November 13.

all, with a profusion of picturesque scenery and properties, and writes *The Prisoner of Zenda*. We know very well that there is no such region as Ruritania, no such family as the Elphbergs, Red or Black—nay, that the thing has not even typical truth as representing some class of Continental principalities and rulers. It is, and we know it to be, a pure figment of the imagination; yet we do not cry out upon its "unreality," and treat Mr. Hope as a shamelessly mendacious person. On the contrary, we willingly join him in the game of make-believe which procures us three or four hours' forgetfulness of both reality and realism. It seems to me that if we had approached it in the right spirit, Mr. Carton's play might have afforded us somewhat similar pastime. Just as we know that there is no room on the map of Europe for Ruritania, so also do we know that there is no room in political history for the Right Hon. Duncan Trendel, M.P., her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department. He is not even generalised from a wide observation of holders of that or any other office—he does not in the least represent the type "Home Secretary," or even the type "Minister." He and his happenings are invented, or perhaps one should say compiled, to no other end but our entertainment. Mr. Carton may say with the Attic amateurs, "My true intent is all for your delight;" and we, forgetful of the rebuke of

Theseus, churlishly refuse to be entertained or to take any delight in the matter!

I say "we" in an impersonal sense, for personally I *was* entertained; and I am convinced that other simple souls would agree with me if the critics gave them half a chance. If one were asked to name the two perennially effective and popular figures of theatrical romance, one would reply without a moment's hesitation, "John Mildmay and Captain Swift"—in other words, the impassive, long-headed, much-enduring, still-and-deep hero, and the polished, daring, picturesque criminal who lounges in the gilded saloons of the very society which is implacably leagued to hunt him down. Now I say it was a happy idea of Mr. Carton's to bring John Mildmay and Captain Swift together in one play. By making Mildmay a Minister he was enabled to work in a great deal of light and agreeable political badinage, quite as good as we have any right to expect on a stage from which serious political criticism is excluded. And by making Captain Swift a deliberate and not merely an instinctive anarchist, an "advance agent for the millennium," he secured an opening for some effective rhetoric about social idealisms, without prejudice to the indispensable opportunities for making Hawkshaw the Detective tap the Captain on the shoulder, and say, "I wish I were as near my man as I am to you now," with other "little ironies"

of a like nature. Moreover, between Mildmay and Swift he was enabled to place a third figure of romance, not quite so old-established as these, but no less popular. This is the goddess-heroine, divinely tall and divinely intransigent on ethical questions, who seems to have been created for, if not by, the art of Miss Julia Neilson and her relative, Miss Lily Hanbury. Miss Hanbury led the way (if I remember rightly) with Lady Windermere, and Lady Marchant in *A Bunch of Violets*; but Miss Neilson holds the longer record with the Puritan maiden in *A Woman of no Importance*, the oppressive wife of the *Ideal Husband*, and now Mr. Carton's heroine. It is characteristic of this imposing personage always to get herself into some scrape which casts a momentary shadow upon her fair fame; therefore there was nothing to stand in the way of the strongly emotional situation which Mr. Carton required for his last act. In brief, then, here was a romance containing all the well-tried ingredients of popular success, seasoned with a very pretty wit and a good deal of that facile satire upon social corruption now so much in vogue—and yet we must needs quarrel with it, because, forsooth, it was "improbable"! Quite seriously, I deplore this sudden solemnity on the part of the critics. If dramatists are to be denied the right to tell a patently and avowedly cock-and-bull story, using it as a vehicle

for bright dialogue and airy social satire, they are cut off from one of the most fertile corners of the "scanty plot of ground" allowed them on the English stage. To my thinking, we should welcome and foster the dramatic romance or satiric melodrama—a restful half-way house between the farce and the so-called problem play. It is full of possibilities, and affords ample room for imagination, humour, and delicate workmanship. These qualities, if not in their highest development, are by no means absent from Mr. Carton's work. When I remember that *The Bauble Shop* was greeted with acclamation on the same stage only two years ago, I ask myself whether it is our judgment that has ripened in the interval, or our temper that has soured.

True it is that Mr. Carton has not put his romance together so deftly as he might have. One does not see why the possession of the traitor's letter should be of such overwhelming importance to Lecaile-Dangerfield. He might like to have a glance at the handwriting with a view to vengeance in the present and safety in the future. But we are led to believe that his chance of escape from the toils that are closing round him somehow depends on his possession of that scrap of paper; and I rack my brains in vain to think how that can be. If the document contained the plan for his capture, one could understand it better; though even in that case it would

seem that, the existence of such a plan once known, the details mattered little, since Dangerfield could always baffle it for the moment by simply not doing what he would otherwise have done, and what the traitor must have counted on his doing. Mr. Carton may have in his mind very convincing reasons why his apostle of anarchy should stake everything on the possession of the paper, but he has sedulously kept them to himself; the result being that the great situation of the last act has a lugged-in air which does much to mar its effect. Then, again, Mr. Carton does not sufficiently eschew that obviousness of incident which audiences (first-night audiences, at any rate) have of late taken to resenting rather fiercely. To use Morris Lecaile's own metaphor (somewhat perilous as he introduces it), Mr. Carton is too apt to show his trumps before their time. When we see an open French-window, the despatch-box containing the fateful document right opposite it, as though ready to walk away of its own accord, and a high-backed arm-chair discreetly averting its face on the other side of the room, we anticipate at a glance the burglarious entrance of Lancelot Lecaile, while his stainless Guinevere lies latent in the chair. When, at last, in the fulness of time, all this duly occurs, we have grown tired of waiting for it, and can scarcely repress an "Ah!" of sarcastic satisfaction as the lady snuggles into her ambush, and the long-looked-for

marauder tiptoes in at the inviting casement. "The art of the theatre," as M. Sarcey is never tired of quoting from M. Dumas, "is the art of preparations"; but there are very clear limits to the validity of this axiom, and over-preparation is certainly the most fatal of errors. That (among other things) was what wrecked the last act of *Delia Harding*. The clumsiest thing a dramatist can possibly do is to lay a long and elaborate train for the ignition of a squib. We take pleasure in an event which surprises and yet convinces us—which we feel we *ought* to have foreseen. We scoff at an occurrence which nothing but our knowledge of the tricks of the stage could possibly lead us to expect, yet which, knowing these tricks, we have foreseen from afar, and resented in anticipation.

Mr. Carton's style has been a good deal criticised, not, certainly, without reason. His dialogue is a bewildering maze of metaphors; his tropes do tread upon each other's heels, so fast they follow. His Anarchist talks of "a chaos of blind justice and stagnant law," and remarks that "science has given to revolutionists the key of death, and they have turned it in the lock while all Europe stood trembling on the threshold." The Home Secretary says to his wife, "The estrangement you have built up between us has received its coping stone," and she informs him that she has "turned the lens of truth upon her own heart," and that "when he first gave her his

name she hung round it her garland of wild flowers." There is also an astonishing passage in which two statesmen, over their after-dinner cigarettes, talk for an interminable time in a sort of medical jargon, like doctors holding a post-mortem on the body politic. But this tropical luxuriance of imagery ought to be considered, not as an unredeemed defect, but as the excess of a quality. Mr. Carton has wit and imagination, if only he would keep them in check; he has a style of his own, though at present an unchastened one. A quality in excess may always be corrected; a quality absent can seldom be acquired. Mr. Pinero was at one time—not so very long ago—addicted to a similar redundance of metaphor; now even his detractors admit the nervous sobriety of his serious dialogue.

Mr. Charles Wyndham is admirable as the Right Hon. John Mildmay, and Mr. Lewis Waller is sombrely romantic as Captain Lecaile-Swift. As the ideally virtuous Mrs. Trendel, Miss Julia Neilson appears, or rather reappears, in a character she has made her own; while Miss Mary Moore is rapidly making her own the class of flighty and irresponsible women of the world to which Mrs. Thorpe-Didsbury belongs. Why Mr. Brookfield should make this lady's "Prince Rupert" so aggressively ill-mannered I cannot guess, but he succeeds in amusing the audience. Mr. Sydney Brough and Miss Maude

Millett play the indispensable turtle-doves very pleasantly, and Mr. D. S. James and Mr. De Lange contribute quaint character sketches.

XXIII.

“THE TRIUMPH OF THE PHILISTINES”—THE SECOND
MRS. EBBSMITH.

22nd May.

MR. HENRY ARTHUR JONES, it appears to me, is developing a manner, or rather experimenting in a new convention, feeling his way towards a new formula. The critics who have set their heart on a revival of comedy, as distinct from farce on the one hand and drama on the other, ought to keep a sympathetic eye upon him and hearten him on, judiciously chastening his errors, no doubt, yet with affection rather than asperity, with rods, not with scorpions. Personally, I am rather a heretic on the subject of comedy. I think there are far fewer comedies in the world than is generally supposed, most of the plays which pass under that name being essentially either dramas or farces. Still, one can conceive a satirico-sentimental treatment of life, fantastic, yet keeping on the hither limit of farce, to which the name of “comedy” might conveniently be appropriated; and

it is towards this that Mr. Jones appears to be feeling—or groping?—his way. Whether he himself will be the man to perfect and, as it were, to fix the formula, depends on several eventualities. Mainly, one foresees, it depends on the question whether he can succeed in capturing that indefinable, elusive, and yet indispensable quality, distinction—distinction of thought, distinction of style. As yet he is far enough from it—rather further, perhaps, in *The Triumph of the Philistines** than in *The Crusaders*. But he is full of aspiration and experimental ardour. He has achieved a position which gives him a free hand, and he will certainly not rest satisfied with repeating himself. It has been the facile fashion in several quarters to flaunt an indiscriminating and insolent contempt for all Mr. Jones's works and ways. Some day, perhaps, he may rejoice the hopeful among us, and surprise the scornful, by producing a work of really ingenious idea and consistently delicate workmanship. In the meantime, he is casting off the trammels of convention and imitation, and developing, as I have said, a distinct manner of his own.

If you insist on getting down to the bed-rock of criticism—or should one rather say skimming the surface?—by forcing on me the crude question, "Do you like *The Triumph of the Philistines*?" I fear I must answer in the negative. It is amusing in

* St. James's, May 11—June 19.

the superficial sense of the word rather than in that deeper sense on which Mr. Jones himself is so fond of insisting. There is a distinctly comic idea in the intrusion of not only frank but rank Paganism, personified in the French model, into the grimly respectable atmosphere of Market-Pewbury; and as Sally Lebrune is played with infinite spirit, gusto, and delicacy (though the word may seem out of place) by Miss Juliette Nesville, the scenes in which she is engaged—and she pretty well permeates the play—become highly entertaining. But a play one likes is a play that either satisfies one's judgment or else possesses such charm, in spite of imperfections, that one would willingly see it again and yet again. Now I shall have no difficulty in keeping my feet from straying in the direction of the St. James's Theatre during the run of *The Triumph of the Philistines*; it is certainly not a play round which my thoughts linger lovingly; and, if it satisfies my judgment at all, it is in an oddly inverted sense which, at the risk of seeming wantonly paradoxical, I shall try to explain.

What pleases me, then, in *The Triumph of the Philistines* is that it is such a gloriously ill-made play. There is not a rule of orthodox construction, there is scarcely a canon of mere common-sense, that it does not openly outrage. Let us look first at the technical audacities. From the point of view of mere story-telling, no principle is more clearly justified, or more

universally admitted, than that loose ends must not be left hanging about—that a thread of interest, once distinctly inwoven in the fabric, must not be suddenly broken off without fulfilling any definite function. Now, in Mr. Jones's play we have at least two such futile threads of interest. When a gentleman, on the stage, commits a deliberate illegality, an act for which he could be indicted and severely punished, we reasonably expect to hear something more of it. Mr. Jorgan deliberately destroys Willie Hesseltine's picture, valued at £200; our attention is concentrated on the proceeding in virtue of its position at the end of an act; we are left speculating on what is to come of it; and, behold! nothing comes of it at all. The thing is a mere character-trait, a symptom of Jorgan's madness, and as such it is not ill-conceived; but there is no doubt that the late Monsieur Scribe would have held Mr. Jones's method of dealing with the matter scarcely less criminal than Mr. Jorgan's. Then again, the genius, Willie Hesseltine, is carefully introduced, is assigned a love-scene in the first act, and is altogether treated with the consideration due to a leading character; but at the beginning of the second act he goes off to Rome, and is henceforth "out of the saga." His function is simply to do the artistic patter; and when Mr. Jones thinks we have had enough of that, he is dismissed in a turn of the hand. I am far from objecting; indeed, I think he is

better out of the way; but he himself might complain, in the words of the baby's epitaph,

“Since so quickly I was done for,
I wonder what I was begun for—”

and begun, too, on so large and handsome a scale. And not only are single strands thus arbitrarily broken off—the whole yarn is left at a ragged end. The curtain falls on Mlle. Lebrune “springing on Jorgan’s neck,” and crying, “Ah! you are all I have in the world!” to the horror and amazement of the assembled Philistines. Thus the plot, as it were, begins all over again, and the history of morals in Market-Pewbury is left half told. If we feel any interest at all in the matter, we want to know whether Mr. Jorgan did or did not continue to throw dust in the eyes of his fellow-townsmen, did or did not come forth from the Venusberg without a stain on his character. Mr. Jones does not even end with a note of interrogation, but rather with a “To be continued in our next.” Furthermore, we are supposed to take a tender interest in a pair of lovers who have had never a love-scene to set our interest agoing. They are introduced to each other in the first act, and we shrewdly suspect (for in the theatre we are all inveterate matchmakers) that they are going to fall in love; but we have not the smallest positive evidence of the fact before we find, in the second act, that

misunderstandings have arisen, and the lady declines to look at the gentleman. Miss Elliott Page, who plays Mrs. Suleny, has been severely blamed for failing to enlist our sympathies in this romance; and indeed her performance, though charming at some points, seemed at others to be marred by a touch of self-consciousness. But the ineffectiveness of the character was not her fault, but the author's. No actress can make much of a love-part which, up to the very last moment, is all suspicion and jealousy. Fancy *Romeo and Juliet* with the love-scenes omitted, "by special request"! Mr. Jones, it is true, does give us a love-scene in the first act—but between the wrong couple. In short, he has lost no opportunity of flouting the French theory of the well-made play as wantonly as his minx-heroine flouts the British theory of the well-made life.

And if he snaps his fingers at technical maxims, to material probabilities he pays even less regard. It would be idle to dwell upon the absurdity of the whole action of the Market-Pewbury Witenagemot with reference to Willie Hesseltine's Bacchante. That, of course, is only Mr. Jones's fun—that represents the element of fantasy, of wilful departure from, one might almost say allegorisation of, prosaic fact, which belongs, and rightly belongs, to the comedy-formula after which Mr. Jones is striving. I cannot think that, in this case, his fantasy has been happily

inspired: his satire strikes me as ugly, shallow, and bitter; but I recognise the intention, while regretting the execution. It is very doubtful, on the other hand, whether the exceeding tenuity of the intrigue can be defended on the same grounds. The attempt to blackmail Sir Valentine and drive him out of Market-Pewbury is the wildest invention conceivable. There is not an atom of evidence to connect him with Mlle. Lebrune and her frocks; and if there were, what on earth need a man in Sir Valentine's position care for the tittle-tattle of the market-town that happens to lie on or near his estate? He can easily put himself right with the woman he loves (it was the feebleness of his attempt to do so that somewhat strained the patience of the audience in the last act); and for the rest, he can let "public feeling in Market-Pewbury" run as high as it pleases without giving the matter a second thought. He is neither standing for Parliament nor ambitious of shining in Market-Pewbury society. Mr. Jones, if I mistake not, has more than once lamented Ibsen's preoccupation with the "parochial" politics of petty Norwegian villages; but here we have him (unconsciously, no doubt) transplanting a Norwegian village to the English Midlands, where it simply does not exist. In one of the small coast-towns of Norway a scandal may very easily lead to the boycotting and practical ruin of a Consul Bernick or a Doctor Stockmann;

but when was the moral indignation of the local tradesmen known to drive into exile an English squire with a rent-roll of £15,000 a year? The thing is preposterous; it transcends the limits of legitimate fantasy, for it no longer bears even a fantastic relation to real life. And, if it did, I think Mr. Jones will find, when he has perfected his formula, that the fantastic element must not be allowed to intrude itself, at any rate as a determining factor, into the serious interest.

Here, then, we have a play which, intentionally and unintentionally, transgresses all the rules, not only of convention but of reason, for arousing and holding the interest of an audience. Yet it does (except for a few moments in the last act) hold the interest of the audience very effectually. How is this to be explained? Well, I think—and this is the "inverted sense" in which the play satisfies my judgment—I think it interests people because its whole aim and effort is intellectual, not technical. Through all its audacities and perversities of form, we feel the workings of a mind which is striving to think and utter its thought, instead of simply to pass two hours and a half in the more or less skilful retelling of some empty and purposeless old story. The play, in short, exists in and for its criticism of life—generally a somewhat eager, shallow, and stridulous criticism, but now and then really vivacious

and penetrating. A good play it certainly is not; by strict rule it might even be set down as a singularly bad play. All the more clearly does it prove that even the British public has reached the point of preferring a bad play which means something, to an adroit play which means nothing. Therefore I welcome it.

There are in reality only two acting-parts in the play—the minx and the moral madman. Of Miss Nesville I have already spoken. Mr. Waring, as Jorgan, made a gallant struggle with what might have been, but was not, a great part. It was not Mr. Waring's fault that an essentially tragic character had to be for ever lapsing into the merely grotesque. Can anything be more truly and deeply tragic than the struggle between the senses and the conscience in a narrow and fanatical nature? "That way madness lies;" and Mr. Jones has half-recognised the fact in the picture-stabbing and several other touches. Perhaps he may yet draw at full length the Puritan Jack-the-Ripper of whom he has here given us only a hesitating sketch. The serious side of the figure is, of course, at variance with the comic intrigue, to which it is systematically sacrificed. Jorgan has not that first requisite of a credible character—a consistent moral self-consciousness. Sometimes he is the self-deceiving hypocrite, more often the vulgar Tartuffe; so that Mr. Waring, even

if he had more thoroughly concealed his native refinement and assumed the grossness of the personage, could not possibly have made a convincing character of him. Mr. Alexander, as Sir Valentine, plays with grace and ease what is little more than a walking-gentleman's part; Mr. Esmond is good in one of the fantastic characters which are becoming his speciality; Lady Monckton is admirable as the worldly-wise Lady Beauboys; and the Market-Pewbury grotesques are cleverly sketched by Mr. James Welch, Mr. E. M. Robson, and Mr. Ernest Hendrie. The episode of Miss Angela Soar, by the way, should be promptly eliminated. It is childishly cheap and conventional—a piece of pre-Pickwickian caricature.

Miss Olga Nethersole deserves all credit for a meritorious effort to think out and embody the character of Mrs. Ebbsmith.* But her effort is practically nullified—in fairness to author and actress alike one is bound to speak frankly—by an extreme staginess of method, entirely foreign to the character, and to every character of really subtle composition. A style of acting which may be suitable enough, and even indispensable, in “star” parts of the Sardou and early Dumas type, is flagrantly out of place in characters of an intellectual, rather than a specifically emotional, order. You cannot work a hundred-ton

* See p. 76.

gun on board a torpedo-boat. In the first two acts, Miss Nethersole's comprehension of the part was clearer than Mrs. Patrick Campbell's. She showed a genuine artistic spirit in "lying low" for the great contrast when she appears, as the Duke of St. Olpherts might put it, "unclothed and in her right mind." Her masses of hair, bunched round her face like George Eliot's in the well-known portrait, her ungainly gowns, the stern gracelessness of her movements and occupations, all denoted a sincere effort to realise the author's intention, and impress us with the eccentricities of "Mad Agnes." In the scene with the Duke she really and rightly lapsed into her platform manner, and "Trafalgar-squared" him to some purpose. Mrs. Campbell had very obviously never been on a platform in her life. Moreover, Mrs. Campbell, by her comparative coolness, kept herself entirely on the adversary's level, and fenced with him as equal with equal, so that we felt it to be a drawn battle. Miss Nethersole, by losing her self-control, practically gave him the victory, and we realised that she must feel the necessity of calling up her reserve forces if she was, after all, to hold her own. Thus the transformation-scene was much more clearly motived, and in itself much more effective. Miss Nethersole did actually put off the "dowdy demagogue" and put on the beautiful woman. Mrs. Campbell never put off the beautiful woman, and

when the time for the transformation came, succeeded only in putting on a less becoming gown. Briefly, then, in the first two acts Miss Nethersole seemed to me to interpret the author's intention more clearly than her predecessor, though already one regretted her artificiality of method. In the third act, unfortunately, staginess took the upper hand, to the total destruction of the character. The Bible scene seemed to me one of the most painful pieces of over-acting I ever witnessed, grotesquely disproportionate to the matter in hand, and radically inartistic whatever the matter might have been. I am bound to add, however, that it was much applauded. Mr. Hare, a consummate artist, is better than ever as the Duke of St. Olpherts; but Mr. Forbes Robertson seems to have lost all interest in Lucas Cleeve. It is true that the part is not really in his line; but that is a poor reason for caricaturing it.

XXIV.

THE DEFEAT OF THE PURITANS.

The New Budget, 23rd May.

THE title of Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's new comedy, *The Triumph of the Philistines*, has, I think, been misunderstood. It has been hastily assumed that Messrs. Jorgan, Pote, Blagg, Modlin, Skewett, Wapes, and Corby, the civic fathers of Market-Pewbury, are the persons indicated by the nickname; whereupon it is acutely objected that they are not Philistines, and that they do not triumph. Of course not; they are Puritans, not Philistines, and they are "scored off" every time, as Puritanism is apt to be in this much-maligned country of ours. That is where Mr. Jones shows his superior insight. He knows that, except in one or two age-old strongholds, such as Sabbatarianism, the Puritans are getting the worst of it all along the line, and the Philistines are riding roughshod over them. Who, then, are the Philistines in this instance? Why, clearly Sir Valentine Fellowes, Lady Beauboys, Mrs. Suleny, and Willie Hesselstine. Mr. Jones is not the dupe of that blundering antithesis between "artist" and "Philistine." He knows that the artist-Philistine is the deadliest of his tribe—unless it be the art-patron-Philistine, with his "comfortable little fifteen thousand a year," as that arrant

snob, Sir Valentine, smugly phrases it. How Mr. Jones must marvel at our density! He re-tells the story of Samson and Delilah, and we must needs go and set down Samson-Jorgan as the Philistine, and Delilah-Lebrune as one of the Chosen People! Heavens and earth! where are our Bibles? I am sure the pagan Mrs. Ebbsmith, even before she plucked the Bible out of the stove, could have told us that Delilah was the Philistine, and not Samson.

What a Philistine idea, for instance, to think of painting a Bacchante from a pert little French gutter-snipe, or, as Charles Lamb puts it, "one of those little tawdry things that flirt at the tails of choruses"! "I won't change a rag, or a ribbon, or a button of her," cries the Philistine in velveteen, "to save an empire from perdition!" What on earth has a Bacchante to do with ribbons and buttons? Are her hooks-and-eyes and safety-pins equally sacred from change? No wonder Mr. Jones prefers to leave to our imagination this Bacchante of the Moulin Rouge. In what clear and masterly strokes, too, is the Philistinism of Sir Valentine and Lady Beauboys indicated. "Let every man do exactly as he pleases," says Sir Valentine, "because when he's doing what he pleases he's doing what Nature tells him to do, and that must be right. Why should I set myself up to be wiser than Nature?" And, again,

"I've never been ashamed of being a man, or wanted Nature to alter the whole course of her physiological economy to suit my convenience." Could anything be plainer than this? It completes the picture to a nicety, balancing against the Philistine who prates about Art with a big A, the still more intolerable Philistine who rants about Nature with a big N. And this shallow, optimistic Anarchism, this complacent double-shuffle with three or four different meanings of the word "nature," some of us have actually taken for Mr. Jones's personal philosophy! Truly, I think he has reason to complain of us. Why should we accuse him of wantonly playing with the flint and steel of sophistry in the powder-vaults that underlie civilisation?

Mark, now, the enlightened sympathy with which he treats his Puritans, so foolishly mistaken for Philistines. He does not dissemble their ridiculousness, for Puritanism *is* ridiculous, and Mr. Jones is nothing if not candid. He even goes out of his way to show how cruelly they have been handicapped by Sir Valentine's friend, Nature. Jorgan has a "drab complexion, with black speckles, and stubby reddish-brown hair." Skewett is "a little, sniffing, rasping man, with mean, irregular features badly arranged round a formidable, bent, broken, red beak of a nose." Wapes is "a large, flabby, sleepy man, with a rolling walk, bandy legs, no neck to speak of . . .

and a very weak, wheezy, crackling voice." Corby has "ginger whiskers, bright red hair, and a little snub nose." Pote is a "mangy, smirking little man" with "weak, watery eyes." Men so hideously maltreated by Nature may very naturally resent the yoke of the flesh; but, in spite of all their disadvantages, what fine, courageous, disinterested fellows Mr. Jones shows them to be! Here it is that the broad humanity of the true artist makes itself felt. In this respect, Shakespeare himself might take a lesson from Mr. Jones. Shakespeare, the Stratford parvenu, has nothing but contempt for the "greasy citizen," malodorous, cowardly, fickle, sycophantic. To Shakespeare that one thing human was alien, perhaps because he was in reality so closely akin to it. Mr. Jones is subject to no such limitation. He can do justice to the dignity and heroism even of the lower-middle-class Puritan.

Yes, they are noble fellows, these shopkeepers of Market-Pewbury. Their little town is overshadowed by a local magnate, Sir Valentine Fellowes, Bart., with his comfortable little £15,000 a year. He is, we are told, "the chief owner of property in the town"; he chuckles over the prospect of raising the rent of a lady with whose opinions he disagrees; in short, one would fancy that a visitor to Market-Pewbury might find occasion to alter a single word in Burns's "Epigram on a Visit to Inverary," and say:—

“ Whoe’er he be that sojourns here
I pity much his case,
Unless he crawl to wait upon
The Lord their God, his Grace.”

But do these tradesmen cringe and crawl to their landlord, the owner of the local “great house”? Not a bit of it! They are sturdily independent and conscientiously offensive to him. They care not a straw though he withdraws his custom and deals at the Stores. They tell him that “the more he knows them, the less he’ll like them.” They inform him, not without a sneer, that they “expect him to set them a pattern of moral respectability.” Seeing him give a £10 note to a young woman in whom they neither have, nor pretend to have, the slightest interest, they fiercely demand “an explanation.” The butcher habitually treats the baronet “very aggressively,” the upholsterer takes not the slightest trouble to upholster his manners towards him. In short, they are models of the free and independent Briton, and utterly regardless of their worldly interests where principle is at stake. They are “village Hampdens” to a man.

Note, now, their enthusiasm for the cause of purity. They hear that in a private house there exists a picture which led the butcher’s boy, on witnessing it, to exclaim, “Oh crikey and Jeeroosalem, ain’t she a stunner!” Thereupon they instantly “demand” to see it, and having been permitted to do so, they

express their intention of holding a public meeting "to demand its instant destruction." Is not this admirable! They have not a shred of law or reason on their side; they may "demand" till they are not only "speckled" but black in the face, and no one need pay the smallest attention to them; but they are inflexible in the performance of what they think their duty, though it cannot have the slightest effect beyond the further exasperation of the lord of the manor, who is a friend of the painter, and has, indeed, bought the picture. Finally, one of them, the intrepid Jorgan, actually risks incurring heavy damages, if not a turn of the treadmill, in order to sweep the abomination from the face of the earth. Whatever may be the cause, I say that such heroic self-devotion ennobles it. We may be a nation of shopkeepers; but Mr. Jones has shown that even in Market-Pewbury the claims of the till are sternly subordinated to those of the ideal.

And they are splendidly charitable, these narrow-minded but large-hearted Britons. They are founding a truly palatial home for the orphans of workers in the leading industry of the town—the Boot and Shoe and Closed Uppers trade. Mr. Jorgan is himself, it would seem, a leading employer in this industry—how grandly he recognises the duties of his position! How different from the Gradgrind and Bounderby of mid-century lampoons! How he shames that arch-Philistine Sir Valentine, who swaggers about his

£15,000 a year, and assaults a man of half his weight who asks for a subscription to the Orphanage! Mr. Jones has perhaps carried his satire a little too far at this point. Sir Valentine, in real life, would probably *salve* his conscience by giving back to the Orphans some trifle of what he has ground out of their parents for the privilege of existing on his domain. He must recognise, too, that Nature prompts the Orphans to eat bread and treacle, and what Nature tells an Orphan to do must be right. Of course he may reply that, without prejudice to the Orphans' right to eat bread and treacle if they can get it, *his* Nature prompts him to consume other and more costly delicacies, to which end he keeps his money in his pocket. Whereupon it must be pointed out to him that *their* Nature may one day impel the Orphans, who, after all, are in an increasing majority, to rebel against even Mr. Jorgan's dole of bread and treacle, and help themselves to Sir Valentine's tit-bits. Thus society would be comfortably reduced to the state of primitive savagery to which Sir Valentine's ethical system must "naturally" conduct us.

But after all—such is the bitter worldly-wisdom of Mr. Jones's tragi-comedy—it is the Philistines that triumph, and Puritanism, in the person of its foremost champion, that is put to public shame. You know the story—it is as old as Samson, as old as Adam. It is so painful and humiliating that Mr. Jones, who

loves not to look into "the dark places of the soul," prefers to treat it symbolically. He shows us no temptation-scene, no gradual lapse from righteousness. He symbolises all the seductions of Eve-Delilah in a minx's wink! "The female winked at me, and I fell"—in these eight words Mr. Jorgan might sum up his tragedy. But if Mr. Jones spares us the details of his fall, he is ruthless in depicting the moral and even intellectual ruin that ensues from it. Apart from its turpitude, did ever crazier notion enter the mind of man than the scheme of the fallen Jorgan for passing off his temptress upon Sir Valentine! It is a conspiracy to blackmail, which has not the remotest chance of success, since there is not a particle of evidence to support it. A Philistine Sir Valentine is, and a very flimsy philosopher, but an imbecile he is not; and in making Mr. Jorgan assume him to be one, Mr. Jones subtly indicates the total degeneration of mental fibre produced even in a noble nature by the virus of passion. Of course the Philistine triumphs, without turning a hair, over such a weak invention of the enemy; and the curtain falls upon "Jorgan's face, ghastly with terror, seen above Sally's arms, which are tightly clasped round his neck."

"C'est Venus toute entière à sa proie attachée."

A profoundly melancholy, infinitely suggestive drama, filling us with an awe-stricken sense of the mystery

that enwraps the moral government of the universe. The lips smile, but the heart is stirred to its depths.

XXV.

“FÉDORA.”

29th May.

AT last we are in a position to form something like a reasoned appreciation of the talent of Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Hitherto, since her leap into fame, she has appeared either in parts which obviously interested her very little—Dulcie Larondie and Kate Cloud—or in Mr. Pinero’s undemonstrative and analytic characters, which she created in close co-operation with the author, making herself, as it were, a delicate instrument under his touch. In these parts we had no standard by which to judge her, not only because she was the first to perform them, but because the order of effects attainable in them was in great measure new and unfamiliar. All we could say with certainty was that in this peculiar style of part she displayed a peculiar and fascinating personality. Now, in *Fédora*,* she has grappled with a great “acting part” of the ordinary emotional type. We know quite well what effects the author intended and by what

* Haymarket, May 25—July 20. Towards the end of the run ill-health compelled Mrs. Campbell to relinquish the part, and it was played by Mrs. Beerbohm Tree.

methods they are to be attained. No novelty of subject, no intellectual interest, distracts attention from what may be called the sheer mimetics of the performance—the realisation and expression of *Fédora's* states of feeling. Some of us, no doubt, can actually compare Mrs. Campbell, point by point, with her predecessors in the character—Sarah Bernhardt, Mrs. Bernard Beere, and Eleonora Duse. This I cannot do. I have a deplorably bad memory for details of acting—positions, business, intonations, and so forth. Beyond the general impression produced by these actresses, I remember nothing at all of their performances; and for once this obliviousness is almost an advantage, since it assures me that, where I dissent from Mrs. Campbell's reading of the part, I am not simply quarrelling with her originality.

Of her great popular success there can be no doubt. The majority of the audience was genuinely delighted, and even the minority was conquered by her wonderful physical charm. This is the first time that Mrs. Campbell has appeared in one of those cosmopolitan parts in which great sumptuousness of costume is permissible. Neither Paula Tanqueray nor even the new-gowned Agnes Ebbsmith can possibly dress like Sarah Bernhardt in all her glory; the Princess *Fédora Romazoff* can and must. From the moment of Mrs. Campbell's first entrance it was clear that Sarah Bernhardt had found a rival in the art of wearing

clothes. It would be difficult to imagine a more superb picture than the *Fédora* of the opening scene, her tall willowy figure divined amid the ample folds of a flowing white garment, indescribable in my poor masculine vocabulary. It is whispered to me that Mrs. Campbell's gowns are by no means irreproachable from the expert—that is to say, the feminine—point of view; but if the art of feminine attire be to charm the masculine sense, I can only offer my unqualified homage to Mrs. Campbell's dressmakers. Throughout the play, her figure, when at rest, is a delight to the eye. Her walk, on the other hand, cannot be called graceful; she patters rather than sails along; but the little suggestion of helplessness in the movement is far from unpleasing. There is a certain helplessness, too, a childishness, in her diction, which, though it harmonised better with the petulance of Paula Tanqueray than with *Fédora's* masculine decision, is by no means without its charm. Mrs. Campbell's method of voice production is defective; it costs her an effort to make herself audible throughout the theatre; but her enunciation, her articulation, is curiously precise and beautiful. She speaks English almost like a highly accomplished foreigner, perfectly familiar with the language, yet afraid to take the slightest liberties with it. She seldom permits herself an elision. "I'm," "it's," "you're," she will hardly ever say; always "I am," "it is," "you are."

She gives to every syllable its value and more than its value, with a tendency to make short vowels long, and long vowels longer. Short "i," especially, she pronounces almost like a Frenchwoman. "I do not shreenk from heem;" "My hand would have drawn eetself away had he been geelte of Vladimir's death." One imagines that Mrs. Campbell must have had to fight against defective articulation at the outset of her career, and so acquired an almost laboured nicety of utterance. The effect is not sufficiently marked to be really foreign; I should rather call it pleasantly exotic. Peculiar and pretty it certainly is.

The new *Fédora*, then, brings to her task all possible charms for the eye and the ear. Does she bring the imagination which realises, and the art which expresses, the intensities and complexities of emotion through which this woman passes? The answer, it seems to me, must, on the whole, be in the negative. As yet—one must not speak as though the possibilities of Mrs. Campbell's art were defined and exhausted—as yet she possesses a very limited impersonative power. So much of *Fédora* as she finds in herself she does not fail to express; but she cannot enlarge or transform herself. She speaks the words of the part without a complete realisation of their emotional groundwork, or of their theatrical possibilities. Her intonations are never inspired by a deep identification of herself with the character. She is always endea-

vouring to act *Fédora*; never, except perhaps in the last scene, does she succeed in letting *Fédora* act her, enter into, possess, and govern her. Even where she finds adequate expression for the surface emotion of a particular speech or passage, she has no power of realising, or making us realise, the larger under-current of emotion which is almost always present in this character. In the first act, for example, it is only when anxiety is the dominant feeling of the moment that she is anxious at all. The fever of suspense which should underlie the whole scene, and for which the investigation of the crime serves as a mere safety-valve, is very insufficiently indicated, or not at all. This act, indeed, seemed to me the most imperfectly realised of the four. Even in the opening scene with *Désiré*, one missed the Princess in *Fédora*. She conversed with the French valet almost as with an equal. After the dying Vladimir has been brought home, speech after speech fell unreal and unconvincing on the ear. "Ah, help, help! Bring me linen—water!" "Well, doctor, tell me!" "Where is the murderer?" "No, there is nothing there" (as she searches the drawer)—in none of these phrases did Mrs. Campbell seem to me to catch the right accent, to speak with the true note of overmastering agitation. Even her rage had a touch of pettiness, of scolding, in it. The mere theatrical opportunities, too, she missed. There is a passage where, after a vehement

declamation, she turns to the boy Dmitri with an eager question, "Yes, yes—his name?" Here she entirely slurred the effect of sudden transition which the author evidently designed. Féдора's long speech at the window became, in Mrs. Campbell's hands, a mere interruption to the dramatic action, a sort of elocutionary set-piece, instead of a carrying-forward of the tense emotion of the scene. In short—I speak for myself alone—there was not a single point in the whole act where Mrs. Campbell succeeded in making the character and the situation real and present to me. The second act was better, because, up to the close, the emotions are neither so vehement nor so complex. Some phrases Mrs. Campbell spoke admirably, such as "That is—myself," where she is telling Siriex of Ipanoff's devotion to her. Her by-play on the sofa, when she is waiting for Ipanoff to begin his confession, is excellently imagined, and there are many clever touches throughout the act. On the other hand, she made nothing at all of the passage in which Siriex questions her as to whether she wishes to find Ipanoff guilty, and very little of the pretty speech, "And then comes reason to say 'Who knows?' and love to say 'What matter?'" by which she explains away her outburst of horror when Loris confesses to having killed Vladimir. In the third act, the reading of the letters was totally unrealised and commonplace; the outburst, "Am I listening to the most ill-starred or

most infamous of men?" had an air of sheer ill-temper rather than of agonised bewilderment; and in the phrase "Kill him, and her too!" Mrs. Campbell for once (and once only, I hasten to add) touched the confines of the ludicrous. The flatness of the great scene at the end of the third act was probably not altogether Mrs. Campbell's fault. Mr. Tree is a notoriously uncertain first-night actor, and I fancy (though I do not absolutely know) that some slight failure of memory on his part led to unintentional pauses and repetitions. Whatever the reason, at all events, the scene flagged and faltered terribly, instead of working up to a very whirlwind of apprehension and passion. Mrs. Campbell's fourth act was by far her best. Her change of countenance while Siriex was telling of the death of Valerian Ipanoff was singularly fine, and throughout the act her facial expression was excellent. This act, too, is largely a silent act for *Fédora*. She has only one very simple emotion to portray—a set and passive despair. Even in her appeals to Loris at the close—her hypothetical excuses for the unknown traitress—there is no need for vehemence or conviction, for hope is dead in her. Tigerish passion and imperious will are here replaced by a broken, clinging, almost voiceless, desperation, which is well within Mrs. Campbell's range. Her death-scene, too, was handled with excellent tact, and was highly effective.

Taking the performance all round, then, I should say that Mrs. Campbell has not as yet either the imagination or the executive power of an actress of the first order. She neither lived the character as Duse (mistakenly to my mind) attempted to do, nor did she, like Sarah Bernhardt and Mrs. Bernard Beere, act it "for all it was worth." She had the discretion to attempt too little rather than too much, and went through the play gracefully and agreeably, now and then hitting on a just intonation, but, as a rule, neither realising for herself nor conveying to us anything like the full depth and strength of *Fédora's* emotions. It was the hind trying to play the panther. The applause, it seems to me, was due partly to the inherent strength of the situations, mainly to the extraordinary beauty and elegance of the actress's personality.

Mr. Tree was vivid and effective as Ipanoff (his first entrance was admirably managed), and Mr. Nutcombe Gould played Jean de Siriex with ease and grace. Mrs. Bancroft's Countess Soukareff was as delightful as ever, and was welcomed by the audience with the enthusiasm of affection.

XXVI.

SIR HENRY IRVING.

The New Budget, 30th May.

WE may congratulate ourselves rather than Sir Henry Irving on his having at last won for his profession that official honour which carries such weight in the estimation of the British public. I remarked last week, not altogether in earnest, and yet not wholly in jest, that Puritanism is being beaten all along the line. What I then said in my haste, we may now, it appears, repeat at our leisure. Certainly Puritanism has received no more decisive facer for many a day than this public recognition of the worthiness and utility of the actor's calling. In a sense, of course, it is a personal triumph for Mr. Irving. There is about his whole individuality a certain native distinction to which many great actors of the past could lay no claim. He has long been recognised as a man of such essential and, so to speak, inward dignity that no outward dignity could possibly misbecome him. But we may be sure that Mr. Irving himself values more than his personal triumph the victory gained for his profession. It is not as an individual exception, but simply as the foremost representative of a great art, that he will wear for many a year (we may trust) his well-won knighthood.

XXVII.

"THE PRUDE'S PROGRESS"—"GISMONDA."

5th June.

THERE are plays which matter and plays which don't; and Messrs. Jerome and Philpott's new comedy, *The Prude's Progress*,* belongs conspicuously to the latter class. To say so is not to condemn but simply to classify it. There are bad plays that matter, and good, or at any rate amusing, plays that don't—it is a question, not of absolute merit, but of relation to the tendencies of theatrical life. Now Mr. Jerome's play stands in no relation whatever to theatrical life, and in no very definite relation to any other sort of life. It is neither realistic nor fantastic, neither simple nor complicated, neither old nor new. Progressive it certainly is not, nor is it precisely reactionary; perhaps "moderate" would be about the word for it. It is satirical and yet irrelevant, "up to date" and yet an anachronism. It is comparatively entertaining and superlatively insignificant.

The authors tell three distinct stories—two sentimental and one comic. Nelly Morris loves Jack Medbury, but for the sake of her poverty-stricken brother engages herself to the middle-aged and well-

* Comedy Theatre, May 23. Transferred to Terry's, July 29—September 14.

to-do Adam Cherry. But the middle-aged Adam finds out before it is too late that she does not love him, and nobly hands her over to his rival. That is Story No. 1. Ted Morris, the impecunious brother of the self-sacrificing Nelly, loves Primrose Deane (there's a name for you!—how fragrant! how idyllic! how vernal!). But Primrose Deane is an heiress, so the high-minded Ted cannot think of proposing to her. She pretends she has lost all her money; he falls into the trap and proposes; and, finding that he has been duped, reluctantly consents to pocket his pride and her fortune. That is Story No. 2. Ben Dixon is a County Councillor and member of the Vigilance Association—which means that, from the Jerome point of view, he is a hypocrite and scoundrel. A philanthropic financier, he fleeces every one he comes across; a Puritan of the strictest sect, he goes to the Aquarium, gets drunk, and insults one of the performers; a shining light of moral reform, he deserts a poor wife and bigamously marries a rich one. Being finally shown up and forced to abscond, he is permitted by his victims to carry off the bulk of his spoils, if only he will refund a sum of £4000, filched from Ted and Nelly Morris, and thereby enable the two pairs of lovers to get married in comfort and dignity. That is Story No. 3. If you like this order of sentiment, this strain of satire, the play will certainly entertain you; for the dialogue

abounds in clever touches of quasi-American humour, and the acting is capital of its kind. Mr. Cyril Maude's portrait of Ben Dixon is a genuine piece of comedy; in the second Mrs. Dixon, Miss Fanny Brough finds one of those ebullient staccato characters in which she most rejoices; Mr. Righton makes of Adam Cherry a pleasant Dickensish grotesque; and the juvenile interest is fairly sustained by Miss Lena Ashwell, Miss Ettie Williams, Mr. Arthur Playfair, Mr. Ernest Leicester, and Mr. W. T. Lovell. At an early stage in the proceedings, by the way, the two last-named gentlemen make a compact of brotherhood—a Bloomsbury, not an Oxford, compact. "I think this occasion demands a drink," says one of them, and they pledge their fraternity in—methylated spirit. Now, are these oaths of brotherhood really sworn in this country and century? I have heard a good many oaths in my time, but never that one. The practice is vouched for by two eminent dramatists, and yet I am sceptical. If Mr. Jerome wants to make the incident plausible, I think he should make his heroes drink the methylated spirit first, and in considerable quantities. But, on second thoughts, why should the authors want to make this incident plausible? It would be quite out of keeping with the rest of the play.

When Mr. Silas Wegg was requested to explain the difference between the Roman Empire and the

Rooshan Empire, his answer was, "That question, sir, we will discuss when Mrs. Boffin is not present." If you ask me wherein Gismonda, Duchess of Athens, differs from Theodora, Empress of Constantinople, and indeed from *Fédora* Romazoff or Floria Tosca, or any other heroine of the Sardou-Sarah repertory, I am greatly disposed to take refuge in the like delicate evasion. The elements of all these personages (characters they cannot be called) are precisely the same—languor, lust, ferocity—but they are mixed in slightly differing proportions.* It would not be very edifying, and still less entertaining, to determine the precise admixture of the courtesan and the virago in the Empress and the Duchess respectively. "Cæsar and Pompey berry much alike," says the burnt-cork humorist—"specially Pompey." So

* There is no escaping from Sardou—he meets us at every turn. It cannot be said that he "comes up smiling," but vivacious and loquacious he is beyond a doubt. He has always an anecdote to relate—an anecdote in four or five acts. Last week it was one of his best anecdotes—*Fédora*—old, but always entertaining. This week it is *Gismonda*—new, so far as the names and costumes are concerned, but distinctly one of the poorer sort. But, good, bad, or indifferent, they are all gory, these splendid efforts of the Gallic genius. The drip of blood runs through them all. Some one to cajole and some one to murder are the two necessities of artistic existence for Madame Sarah Bernhardt; and the Eminent Academician is her most active purveyor of victims. Here is a little tabular statement of the amours and homicides in which Sardou has made himself her accomplice. It will be noticed that in *Fédora*, the first of the series, the bloodshed does not actually take place on the

one might say, "Theodora and Gismonda are very much alike—especially Gismonda." So far as I remember, there is nothing in *Théodora* quite so brutal and abominable as Gismonda's triumph over the dying Zaccaria, or quite so flagrantly sensual as her surrender to Almerio at the end of the previous scene. (Here, by the way, Sardou Ibsenises rather comically: the same absolute renunciation of all legal claim which Ellida, in *The Lady from the Sea*, makes the basis of a true marriage, Gismonda demands as the condition precedent to—well, to a briefer contract.) But it is really of no importance to determine the precise potency of the ingredients; the brew in both cases is practically the same. "Here we have all the ancient statues in their well-known stage. Sardou had not then recognised the importance of getting the scent of carnage over the footlights:—

TITLE-PART.	LOVER.	VICTIM.	INSTRUMENT.	FINALE.
Fédora.	Loris.	Valerian.	Letters.	Suicide by poison.
Théodora.	Andréas.	Marcello.	Hairpin.	Execution by bowstring.
La Tosca.	Mario.	Scarpia.	Bread-knife.	Leap from battlements.
Gismonda.	Almerio.	Zaccaria.	Hatchet.	—

Other dramatists, too, realise the necessity of providing Madame Bernhardt with something to kill, and in *Izéyl*, *Les Rois*, and *Pauline Blanchard* this insatiate scalp-huntress duly adds to her collection. As a rule, you observe, "these violent delights have violent ends"; but Gismonda, by a pleasing exception, actually survives the fall of the curtain.—*The New Budget*, 6th June.

attitudes," says the book-agent in Miss Herford's sketch; and to put Madame Bernhardt through her well-known attitudes is the sole aim of Sardou's art. *The Indiscretion of the Duchess* (so the play might be called, with apologies to Mr. Anthony Hope) fulfils this function as well as any of its predecessors. Indeed, it seems to me that not since *La Tosca* was in its first flush of novelty have we seen Madame Bernhardt acting with such genuine gusto and self-abandonment as in the very passage last mentioned—her conquest of, and surrender to, her low-born lover. The tomahawking scene, on the other hand, produced no effect except one of disgust, which seemed on the point of finding expression when the curtain fell. But the magnificence of Madame Bernhardt's appearance in the last act, and the spectacular novelty and splendour of the scene, restored the complacency of the audience, even at fifteen minutes after midnight; so that enthusiasm may fairly be said to have reigned throughout the evening.*

Monsieur Sardou's drama, in fact, stands shoulder to shoulder with Mr. Jerome's comedy among the plays which don't matter. It is much cleverer and

* In a season of four weeks (May 27—June 22) at Daly's Theatre, Sarah Bernhardt gave thirty-one performances. *Gismonda*, produced May 27, was performed fifteen times; *Magda*, produced June 10, was performed four times; *La Princesse Loïtaine*, produced June 17, was performed four times; *La Tosca* five times; and *La Dame aux Camélias* thrice.

more adroit, of course; but at the same time it is much more pretentiously and pedantically insignificant. The story is not a bad one of its kind. It is like a second-rate novel of Boccaccio. One can almost see the "argument"—something to this effect: *Gismonda, Duchessa d'Atene, da un suo pallasfrenier amata, lungamente si difende; ma, dalla sua magnanimità vinta, ultimamente moglie di lui diviene.* But the Boccaccian text unfortunately meanders like a rivulet through wide meadows of marginal commentary of the most tedious kind, so that half the play seems to be given over to exposition and disquisition. . Imagine a novel from the *Decameron*, elaborately "Grangerised" with fashion-plates of the period, and padded out with paste-and-scissor extracts from the footnotes to Gibbon! I confess to a growing distaste for this bogus history and Brummagem archæology of Monsieur Sardou's. There are just three characters in the drama (or four, counting the child), and just thirty on the playbill; and the odd six-and-twenty are always strolling to the front, arrayed regardless of expense, to talk in conventional phrases about something that does not in the least interest us. There is some excuse for a one-part play, when the one part is acted by Sarah Bernhardt; but why make a one-part play a thirty-part play? I can think of few more unsophisticated pieces of stagecraft than the reappearance in every scene of those four superbly-

arrayed suitors of the Duchess, who have nothing whatever to do, but must needs "move all together if they move at all." The costumes, however, are really picturesque and striking, and the piece is—with the possible exception of *Madame Sans-Gêne*—the most magnificently mounted French play we have yet seen in London.

With new dances and songs, and a new comedian in the person of Mr. John Le Hay, *The Artist's Model* has taken a new lease of life at the Lyric Theatre.* It is not a piece that excites my personal enthusiasm, but the public have taken to it, as I foresaw that they would, and it has certainly the merit of providing Miss Letty Lind with an effective part.

XXVIII.

ELEONORA DUSE.

12th June.

MANY of us must have gone with a certain sinking of spirit to Drury Lane on Wednesday last,† wondering

* See Note, p. 42.

† Eleonora Duse gave eight performances at Drury Lane: *La Dame aux Camélias*, June 3, 8 (afternoon), and 14; *La Femme de Claude*, June 5 and 10; *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *La Locandiera*, June 7 and 15 (afternoon); and *Magda*, June 12. At the Savoy she gave ten performances: *Magda*, June 27, July 1, 6 (afternoon), 10, and 13; *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *La Locandiera*, June 29 (afternoon), July 5 and 12; *La Dame aux Camélias*, July 3 and 8.

why Eleonora Duse should care to approach such a character as Dumas' modern Messalina, *La Femme de Claude*. Defect of faculty was not for a moment to be anticipated, but rather defect of volition. This great artist can do whatever she will, but she sometimes will not do all that she can. One does not understand why, at the two poles of art, she should ever essay Shakespeare's Cleopatra and Sardou's *Fédora*, since she seems deliberately to ignore and go aside from the particular order of effects appropriate to each. One could not but imagine beforehand that Dumas' *Césarine* would fall into the same category of parts foreign to her temperament, or baffling to her intelligence, or intolerable to her moral instincts, and therefore incapable of stimulating and inspiring her to the height of her genius. But it is impossible to predict an artist's phases of feeling, and in this case the actress had in store for us a magnificent confutation of all our reasonings. Something there is in the part of *Césarine* that kindles her imagination, and she plays it with all her body and soul. What that something can be, it is hard to say. The character is not very human, and it is not very clear. By the author's own confession it is "an incarnation, an essential being, an entity." It incarnates the evil and destructive elements in Sex. "L'homme est faible," says *Césarine* as she spreads her toils for Antonin, "Le paradis est toujours à perdre." There is nothing of

the New Woman in her—she is not an enlightened champion, nor even a blind avenger, of her sex. Her maleficence is not a reaction against wrongs done either to womanhood in general or to herself in particular. She is wicked because she is wicked, because she is a symbol of evil. “Elle déshonore ou elle tue, entre deux sourires ; c’est une colère de Dieu.” She has not even the intellectual distinction, the snobbery, as some critics have called it, of a Hedda Gabler. She has a certain cleverness, but just enough to give effect to the base cunning of sex. Why, then, should this character come home so strongly to Eleonora Duse, who shrinks alike from the sensuality of Cleopatra and from the vulgarity of Cyprienne? Perhaps she feels it redeemed by its symbolic quality, by its thorough-paced and, as it were, impersonal turpitude. As a matter of fact, Césarine is not vulgar ; evil, in her case, has something of the dignity of a natural force. Perhaps, too, the great actress simply recognises in the part an irresistible opportunity for pure *acting*. Césarine is acting throughout ; there is no truth, no sincerity, no reality in her. For a moment, perhaps, in her scene with Claude in the second act, she may work herself up into something approaching sincerity. Dumas has not made it quite clear whether she does or does not really hope to turn over a new leaf, and defeat Cantagnac by obtaining the full pardon (even though pardon in this case would mean

complicity) of Claude. But one hardly sees how this is possible. We are rather to suppose, I fancy, that her husband's celebrity is what brings her back to him. "L'impossible me tente," she says to Edmée; and it would afford the keenest satisfaction to her vanity to overleap the mountainous barrier of her past and conquer a share in her husband's brilliant future. With that purpose she comes home, and the intervention of Cantagnac goads her on to the effort. She probably does not trouble herself to determine whether, in case of success, she will make use of her victory to save or to betray Claude. She is throughout playing a game, and playing it with all the resources of her nature. It is in this light, I think, that Eleonora Duse reads the character; and never, surely, did woman play a more brilliant game. She is seduction, sophistry, and devouring egoism incarnate. Her second act, of course, contains her most effective scenes, and was the most applauded; but it would be a mistake to suppose that the first was in any way inferior to it. Touch by touch, she builds up for us the strange, malign, enigmatic figure. That she is physically the type of woman imagined by Dumas we can scarcely suppose; but she had made for herself a sort of sultry beauty, which fell away in moments of dejection and defeat, and left her haggard and sere. There was irresistible witchery in her seduction of Antonin at the beginning of the second

act—no mere languishing hypocrisy, but an affectionate candour, a melancholy and caressing playfulness, which might have vanquished not only St. Antonin but St. Antony himself. As for the great scene with Claude in this act, it will always dwell in my mind as one of the most marvellous pieces of acting I ever saw. Its strength was only equalled by its subtlety. The actress kept herself all the time under perfect control; there was never a touch of strain, of rant; yet the sheer energy of the scene would probably have seemed extravagant in a play that purported to present a picture of real life. We felt, however, that in this apocalyptic drama there was no question of preserving the tone of ordinary drawing-room emotion. It was Dumas' aim (whether he succeeded or not) to display and anatomise the Scarlet Woman at her highest potentiality; and it was clearly his interpreter's business to find for this incarnate Evil not commonplace and measured, but heroic and overwhelming, expression. This Duse achieved with incomparable skill. She showed herself absolute mistress alike of the rhetoric of speech and of the rhetoric of sex. She carried the art of dramatic utterance to its highest pitch—to unrestricted perfection.

Of her other performances what need to speak? The second, third, and fifth acts of her *Marguerite Gautier*, and her *Mirandolina* from first to last, are things to cure us of all foolish regrets for the past and

its fabled glories. There can at no time have been greater acting than this. It is consummate art achieving the illusion of absolute nature. I have heard of a sapient critic who complained that there was "no atmosphere" about Duse. If "atmosphere" means affectation, mannerism, trickery, he was perfectly right. Her *Mirandolina*, says Mr. Walkley, "represents for me the high-water mark of theatrical enjoyment." I can say no more, and no less.

With the exception of that sterling character-actor Signor Ettore Mazzanti, whose *Marchese* in *La Locandiera* we have come to value as an old friend, this year's company is distinctly inferior to its predecessors. Painfully insignificant as Armand Duval, Signor Alfredo de Sanctis was at least passable as the god-like Claude. Signor Dante Capelli made nothing at all of the delightful *Cavaliere di Ripafratta*.

XXIX.

"HEIMAT."

19th June.

SUDERMANN has been long in reaching us, but he has come at last, and with a rush. He has achieved a sort of triumphal entry, the two great actresses of the time making what we used to call a "Queen's Cushion"—"Queens' Cushion" would be a more

appropriate reading in this context—to carry him forward into notoriety. Such a triple alliance—Germany borne aloft by France and Italy—is unprecedented in the history of the drama. Clearly there must be something far out of the common in the talent which can command the interest of two such artists, one of whom has so openly flaunted her patriotic hatred of the author's nationality. It is time we should try to estimate and “place,” provisionally at least, the dramatist whom so rare a fortune has befallen. There will be plenty of opportunity, later on, to reconsider our impressions. In my case, they are not precisely “first impressions,” for I read both *Die Ehre* and *Sodoms Ende* years ago; but last week's performances of *Heimat* (rechristened *Magda*) were my first introduction to Sudermann on the stage.

It is a curious, though not altogether desirable, homage to the genius of Ibsen, that the moment any younger dramatist displays the slightest originality or power, the critics should at once class him as a disciple of the Norwegian master. Not English critics alone, but European criticism as a whole. Whenever a play is produced in Paris of which Monsieur Sarcey does not understand a “*traître mot*”—and that is by no means an infrequent occurrence—he at once bewails the Scandinavian darkness which has descended on the stage erst illumined by

the sunny genius of Scribe. No sooner had Mr. Pinero broken away from farce, fantastic and sentimental, than he was accused of Ibsenising; though in *Mrs. Tanqueray* there was no likeness at all to Ibsen, and in *Mrs. Ebbsmith* only a few external resemblances which he would probably have made haste to remove had he himself been aware of them. And now Sudermann, both in Germany and here, is treated as an imitator of Ibsen, for no better reason, that I can discover, than that he does not write farces and does not imitate Dumas or Sardou. Far be it from me to deny that Ibsen has given an impulse to serious dramatic writing all the world over. He has proved (what so much French theory and practice had almost led us to forget) that a play need not be a plaything, but may go to the very depths of human character and destiny. He has stimulated many writers, and Sudermann among the rest; but just because his influence is so general, it is superfluous and even misleading to dwell upon it in particular instances. We may safely assume that no serious dramatist who has come to the front during the past ten years is quite unconscious of, and unaffected by, Ibsen. He is one of the intellectual forces of the time, an all-pervasive element in the theatrical atmosphere. But I can find no more evidence of imitation in Sudermann's work than in Mr. Pinero's. On the contrary, the points of similarity

are trifling and inessential; the points of dissimilarity are fundamental.

Sudermann, in the first place, is a steady-going prose-writer, Ibsen is before everything a poet. Sudermann never, Ibsen always, "has vine-leaves in his hair." Sudermann, like Dumas, is a social satirist; Ibsen has long ceased to concern himself with society, and has risen to the higher ground of abstract or universal psychology and ethics. Perhaps you think this a paradox; it is a simple statement of fact. Half the misconception and misrepresentation to which Ibsen is subjected arises from our inveterate habit of regarding him as a painter of society. We are told that he is "suburban," that he depicts the life of "Norwegian villages." He does nothing of the sort; he depicts and dissects human souls, and he clothes them in the bodies and costumes which happen to lie readiest to his hand. Compare *Heimat*, for example, with any play of Ibsen's, from *A Doll's House* onwards: which is the more local, the more closely bound down to a given place and time? In *Ghosts*, and again in *Little Eyolf*, Ibsen has treated the relation of parent and child, on the plane of the universal. When Oswald cries to his mother, "I never asked you for life. And what sort of life have you given me? I won't have it. You shall take it back again"—it is not a Norwegian or a German, not a Teuton or a Celt, that is speaking, but stricken

humanity protesting against the superstition that life, under any and all conditions, is a boon to be accepted with inexhaustible and submissive gratitude. When Rita, in *Little Eyolf*, says, "I was fitted to *become* the child's mother, but not to *be* a mother to him," she speaks from the very heart, not, certainly of universal womanhood, but of a particular type of womanhood by no means peculiar to any nation or race. In *Heimat*, on the other hand, we have simply a study of the *patria potestas* as it is understood (if Herr Sudermann is to be believed) in some obscure corners of German society, where the joy of life is ground "exceeding small" between the upper and the nether millstones of puritanism and militarism. Such a local and temporary phenomenon would have little interest for Ibsen. He is neither a satirist of manners nor a reformer of abuses. The paternal authority of Herr Oberstlieutenant Schwartz is in his eyes a historic curiosity, like the Inquisition or the Bastille. Time may be trusted to sweep such stupid barbarisms into the limbo of the thumbscrew and the slave-whip. But there are other and subtler tyrannies, not local or temporary, but inherent in human nature; and it is in these that Ibsen finds the motives for his art. There is the tyranny of passion (*Little Eyolf*), the tyranny of conscience (*Rosmersholm* and *The Master Builder*), the tyranny of egoism (*Hedda Gabler*), the tyranny of the ideal (*The Wild Duck*). Far from

being the small-beer chronicler of a Norwegian parish, Ibsen is of all modern artists the one who goes deepest into the essence of life and is least hampered by its accidents. Which of his leading characters can be called, like Sudermann's Magda, a study of a professional type? Magda is the Bohemian, the artist, the stage queen,

"her nature all subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand."

She is vividly and vigorously drawn, and, by reason of her very obviousness, a most effective stage figure; but she is a creature of social conditions, of accidental environment, differing not in degree but in kind from those essential, elemental beings whom Ibsen conjures up from the deeps of his brooding genius. So little is Ibsen concerned with the study of social or professional conditions, that he is probably the one living dramatist who has never put upon the stage a member of "the oldest profession in the world." Sudermann's technique, again, is as different as possible from Ibsen's. He gets his action well within the frame of his picture, and he writes a good, straightforward, colloquio-rhetorical style, a little diffuse, but not without trenchant turns of phrase and effective pieces of cut-and-thrust dialectic. The distinctive marks of Ibsen's manner—the elaborate retrospections, and the minutely-adjusted mosaic

dialogue—are entirely absent. There is only one passage in the play that really does bring with it a specific suggestion of Ibsen. It is Magda's answer when the Pastor expresses regret for what he might have been if joy had entered into his life at the right time: "And one thing more, my friend—guilt. It is through our errors that we grow. To rise superior to our sins is worth more than the purity you preach." That is like a speech from one of Ibsen's early plays—*The Pretenders*, for example.

It is probably to the intense localism of its atmosphere that we must ascribe Mr. Alexander's long hesitation about producing *Heimat*. An English audience would find it exceedingly hard to understand or tolerate that unspeakable puritan martinet, the Oberstlieutenant Schwartz. It is all very well to give a fair statement of both sides of a case, but it seems to me that Sudermann treats this wooden-headed and wooden-hearted old snob and tyrant with far too much consideration. Does the author quite realise, I wonder, the abject meanness of the gallant Colonel's position when he wrings the hand of his daughter's seducer, who has (after seven years) been coerced into offering her marriage, and says, "My young friend, you have caused me great pain—great pain; but you have made prompt and manly reparation. Give me your other hand as well"? And when his "young friend" makes it a condition of the

marriage that their child shall be disowned and kept at a distance, this charming Christian soldier threatens to shoot his daughter because she ventures to object! As illustrations of domestic Bismarckism these things may be very interesting; but the Colonel's Christianity is too clearly "made in Germany" to come home to the sympathies of the English public, even in the modified degree designed by the author. Nor can I think that Herr Sudermann has been quite successful in adjusting the character of Magda to the requirements of his action. The collapse of her free-will is so instantaneous as to be incredible. What Rebecca West would call "the Rosmersholm view of life" seems to hypnotise her all in a moment. It is true that, in both the French and the Italian versions, a scene which partly accounts for this is omitted—the scene at the beginning of the fourth act, where the Colonel tells Magda that her obduracy will make her sister's marriage impossible. But even then one feels that the Magda of the other acts would reply, "It is not my fault if you make any scandal at all; and if my sister's lover is such a coward as to wreak my misdeeds on her, I say she is well quit of him." Finally, the seraphic Pastor Hefferdingk is unconvincing in the highest degree. His whole character and function are redolent of conventional sentimentality.

The play was well mounted and well acted all

round by the French company at Daly's Theatre ;* miserably mounted and, as regards the subordinate parts, very poorly acted by the Italian company at Drury Lane.† But in Magda the genius of Eleonora Duse rose to its very highest altitude, so that nothing else mattered in the least. She illumined, transfigured, re-created the play. I had read it carefully a day or two before, and I had seen Sarah Bernhardt perform it; but I had not the remotest conception of its possibilities until Duse threw into it the heat of her creative imagination and the light of her incomparable executive power. I doubt if Sudermann himself knows what he has written unless he has seen Duse as Magda. It is no figure of speech, but a literal truth, when I say that she has wiped the very remembrance of Sarah Bernhardt out of my mind. Yet I rejoiced to see Sarah in a human character instead of a mere Parisian confection, and thought her very good in her way. At two points, indeed, she had the advantage of her rival: she made the scene with the lady visitors more plausible, and she realised the author's intention in Magda's first scene with the Pastor, by bursting into a loud and ringing laugh. Duse made a mistake in nipping her laugh in the bud. It is the actual echo of her merriment in that severe abode that awakens Magda's sense of incongruity. For the rest, I remember nothing of

* See Note, p. 186.

† See Note, p. 188.

Sarah Bernhardt's performance. It has faded from my memory like the moon at sunrise. Yes, one thing more I do remember—the way in which she worked—in her favourite clenched-teeth tiger-growl of fury as she turned the recreant Keller out of doors. But how much simpler, vividder, and more telling was the lightning-flash of unutterable scorn with which Duse accompanied the single exclamation “Va-te-ne!” One almost wondered that the unfortunate Regierungsrath did not physically wither and wilt before it. The performance was from first to last a magnificent triumph. I have seldom seen an English audience so thoroughly carried away as was the Drury Lane public at the end of the third act. If there was anything that criticism could fasten upon, it was a slight tendency to overdo the pauses and protract what may be called the inarticulate effects. But it would be mere pedantry to introduce any jarring note into the expression of gratitude for so high and rare an artistic delight.

XXX.

THE RIVAL QUEENS.

The New Budget, 20th June.

THE Bernhardt-Duse controversy promises to become a hardy annual. We cannot help ourselves—we *must* take sides. In the very act of refraining from

comparison, we are all the time comparing. Duse, for example, plays Césarine in *La Femme de Claude*. It is quite possible to write about her performance without mentioning the fact that Sarah played the same part only last year; but who does not see that this sedulous silence is in reality eloquent? If we could praise them equally, or mingle praise and blame in tolerably equal proportions, we should certainly hasten to do so. Therefore, if we praise the second Césarine and make no mention of the first, we clearly imply the strength of our preference, while letting it appear as though we could not express it with reasonable civility. Perhaps it is better, then, to accept the situation frankly, and range ourselves without disguise under the banner of France or of Italy.

A gentleman in the *Pall Mall Gazette* has "opted" for France with no uncertain voice. The performance of *Izéyl* at Daly's Theatre inspires him to declare, as a thing beyond dispute, that Sarah possesses Genius, while Duse and Mrs. Patrick Campbell (happily-assorted pair!) have nothing but Talent to bless themselves with. Why Mrs. Campbell is dragged in I do not know, unless on the alphabetical principle that C comes between B and D. It is unkind of the *Pall Mall* gentleman to make the duel a triangular one. Let us cancel the C, then, and inquire on what principle "genius" can be claimed for B and denied to D.

Pray do not suppose that I am seeking to turn the tables and strip Sarah of genius to deck her rival withal. Sarah Bernhardt is a woman of genius if ever there was one. She used to possess, and still possesses in a certain measure, qualities to which Duse can lay no claim. Beauty of feature is a matter of taste; but stature, presence, can be measured in inches, and here Sarah has a great advantage. The willowy suppleness of her youth—of her *Fille de Roland*, her Berthe in *Le Sphinx*, and her Mistress Clarkson in *L'Étrangère*—has given place to a queenly dignity which makes even her Gismonda memorable from a pictorial point of view. Duse, on the other hand, is insignificant in figure and not naturally graceful. In such a character as Mirandolina she assumes an exquisite Dresden-china elegance; but it is part of her impersonative effort, not of her fundamental endowment. Sarah, again, has a more evenly beautiful voice than Duse. It was never strong enough to carry her to the heights of tragic passion. There were always passages in *Phèdre*, for example, in which she simply ranted. But within its peculiar range, it amply merited, and still merits, the conventional epithet of “golden.” Then she had, and has, an incomparable art of poetic diction. In the aforesaid *Phèdre*, where she does not overstrain herself, she speaks Racine’s alexandrines with a caressing, languorous melody that is quite indescribable, and,

within my experience, unique. How Duse treats verse we have had no opportunity of judging; but certain it is that she has not anything like Sarah's sustained mellifluousness of delivery. There are sharp and almost harsh notes in her voice, though she can on occasion modulate it to the most penetrating tenderness. On the whole, however, the physical and vocal advantages are all on Sarah's side.

But how has she used them? Without taste and without conscience. She has fashioned her genius into a money-making machine. She has got together a repertory of showy, violent, and sanguinary parts, and has played them eight times a week, till all true vitality and sincerity has been ground out of her acting. Her very voice has become a manufactured product, unreal, unconvincing. There is not a note in it which thrills from the heart to the heart. Her subtle smile, her languid carriage, her nervous fevers, her amorous transports, her frenzies of ferocity—we know them all, as her countrymen say, “like the inside of our pocket.” Her whole art has become a marvellous, monotonous, and often vulgar virtuosity. She is mannerism incarnate and carried to its highest pitch. Not for ten years or more has she added a single new effect to her arsenal of airs and graces, tremors and tantrums. She does not dream of taking a great piece of literature and bending her genius to its interpretation. It is the playwright's business to

interpret *her*—to provide her with a new name and new costumes in which to go through the old round of poses and paroxysms. This is what her world-wide public wants and can understand. Even if she had time for such trifles as delicacy of thought and sincerity of feeling, do you suppose they would count for anything in “Jerusalem and Madagascar and North and South Ameriky”? She is no longer an artist, but an international institution. The gold of her genius has been transmuted, by a malign alchemy, into cast-iron.

To the great public she is still wonderful and fascinating, and quite justly so. The marvel is, indeed, considering how she has squandered her gifts, that so many of them should remain, and in such passable preservation. She has flogged and sweated her talent to the very death; yet it still answers to her call. Such staying-power is unique in theatrical history. It is worthy of scientific study and record, as proving the indefinite adaptability of the human frame to the conditions imposed upon it. I do not grudge Sarah one salvo of the applause which follows her round the world, any more than I grudge Mr. W. G. Grace one shilling of his gallantly-earned testimonial. They are cognate “phenomena,” these two popular characters—miracles of skill, pluck, and endurance. But to those who do not seek in the theatre for “phenomena,” infant or otherwise, there is

something unsatisfactory, something almost depressing, in the Sarah of to-day. The more one admires her genius, the more must one deplore its induration, not to say vulgarisation. She still interests, amazes, even thrills us ; but, for my part, I confess that Phèdre is the only character in which, for many years past, she has given me real pleasure.

To Eleonora Duse, on the other hand—the *Pall Mall's* woman of talent as opposed to genius—I owe some of the very keenest delights that the theatre can possibly afford. The past week has raised her higher than ever in my estimation, by proving, in *La Femme de Claude*, that her art is not restricted by her sympathies. She is quite as much at home in this embodiment of perversity and maleficence as in the sentimental Marguerite Gautier or the roguish Mirandolina. In the second act, too, she played with a variety and vehemence of emotional expression that touched the confines of the sublime. To an audience most of whom did not understand her language, and had no books to assist them, she made an essentially dull and pedantic play not only interesting but thrilling, by the sheer force and magnetism of her genius. Pardon ! The word slipped out “promiscuous-like” ; but now that it is on the paper, I say with Pilate, “What I have written, I have written.” Yes ; if high inspiration, wide versatility, and consummate accomplishment are the constituents of genius,

Eleonora Duse is a genius indeed. The limitations of her physical gifts only enhance the splendour of her spiritual endowment. "A plain little woman" I have heard her called; and though no one who has seen her sparkling *Mirandolina* can accept the former epithet without reservation, the phrase may be taken as representing the impression she produces on a casual observer. "Mr. Murphy, sir," said Rogers, "you knew Mr. Garrick. What did you think of him?" "Well, sir, *off* the stage he was a mean little fellow; but *on* the stage"—throwing up his hands and eyes—"oh, my great God!" Off the stage, in the same way, Duse may be a plain little woman; let those who have seen her decide. On the stage she is not plain, but exquisite; not little, but great.

"*Fortunam reverenter habet*," said Johnson of his "little Davy"; and so we may say of Duse, *Ingenium reverenter habet*. She treats her genius, not as a freehold to be marred and wasted at pleasure, but as a trust estate, to be assiduously and reverently tended. She does not act merely with a set of surface nerves which long habit has dissociated, or, so to speak, insulated, from the real centres of sensation. She throws her very being into her task, and while her intelligence keeps vigilant control of every gesture and accent, her whole physical organism responds with sensitive alertness to the touch of her imagination. She is more completely *alive* on the

stage than any one else I remember to have seen. Even to the very finger-tips, she lives the life of the character. Compare her Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* with her Mirandolina, and you will find that she has not only changed her costume, her voice and her accent, but her very temperament. This is acting, this is great art; and what a delight it is to see and recognise it! Drury Lane is not the theatre in which such an actress can be seen to the best advantage; yet it is pleasant to imagine how the greatest of the great artists who have acted within these walls, or on that site, would hasten to claim her as their peer.

XXXI.

"LA PRINCESSE LOINTAINE"—"DIE EHRE."

26th June.

WITH such a beautiful title as *La Princesse Lointaine*,* it would need a very bad poem indeed to displease me; and M. Edmond Rostand's poem seems to me, not bad, but good—a thing of fine imagination and delicate, fantastic expression. Stevenson has somewhere a memorable passage upon the poetry of names; it is apropos of the States and Territories of America, "which form," he says, "a chorus of sweet and most romantic vocables." Indeed, there is nothing so

* See Note, p. 186.

lovely as a lovely name ; and M. Rostand has added one to literature. Or did he come across it ready-made in the Provençal treasure-house where, doubtless, he found the germ of his story? It does not matter ; he printed it on a playbill, this “sweet and most romantic” title, and made it the world’s property. It is evident from Browning’s poem, “Rudel to the Lady of Tripoli” (there is another beautiful name for you!), that M. Rostand did not invent the Troubadour Prince languishing for love of a “Princesse Lointaine,” of whom he has heard through the reports of pilgrims. The voyage, too, with hope at the prow and passion at the helm, may very likely be writ in the story-books ;* but the second and third acts, with the struggle of desire against pity and remorse, are almost certainly of the poet’s own devising. Very ingenious, delicate, and moving is the drama of these acts ; the stuff of a spiritual tragedy is thinly disguised beneath the whimsical bizarreries of a fairy-tale. For my part, I find the combination singularly piquant. I suppose there must be something defective in the style of M. Rostand’s work to account for the coolness with which the French critics received it.

* M. Rostand writes to me :—“The title is entirely of my own invention. It does not exist in the old books. So, too, with the details of the first act—the voyage with its alternations of hope and despair, etc.—nothing of the kind is to be found in the Provençale legend which I read in *Nostradamus*, and which, for the rest, consists of only a few lines.”

No! there is another and much simpler explanation of M. Sarcey's treatment of the play—an explanation which, after stating the facts, I shall leave the reader to divine. The dying Joffroy Rudel, arrived at last at Tripoli, but too weak to be carried ashore, sends his sworn friend Bertrand d'Allamanon, also a troubadour, as ambassador to his unseen lady-love, begging her to come to him. Bertrand lands, fights his way through the guards of the Princess's palace, kills in single combat the gigantic Chevalier aux Armes Vertes, who has been set by the Emperor to keep watch and ward over her, and bursts, wounded and blood-stained, into her presence. "Messire," she cries, "Ah! Qu'avez vous à me dire?" "Des vers!" he replies, and pours forth the love-song of Rudel, of which here are two of the quaint stanzas—

" Car c'est chose suprême
D'aimer sans qu'on vous aime,
D'aimer toujours, quand même,
Sans cesse,
D'une amour incertaine,
Plus noble d'être vaine . . .
Et j'aime la lointaine
Princesse.

" Car c'est chose divine
D'aimer quand on devine,
Rêve, invente, imagine
A peine. . . .
Le seul rêve intéresse,
Vivre sans rêve, qu'est-ce ?
Et j'aime la Princesse
Lointaine."

Up to this point, according to M. Sarcey, the thing is clear enough ; "but from this moment onwards the author plunges deeper and deeper into a psychology so refined and subtle that it is impossible, I will not say to understand anything, but to find our way about with ease. . . . Oh, how fatiguing and painful it is !" The facts are these : Bertrand faints from loss of blood, and is revived by the Princess, who, taking him for Rudel, the unseen lover whose romantic passion has touched her imagination, finds time to fall in love with him while he lies senseless in her arms. When he comes to himself he declares his mission. "You are not Rudel?" she says in effect. "Who, then, are you?" "I am his bosom friend," replies Bertrand ; "come to him quickly—come !" And the Princess answers "No !" as the curtain falls on the second act. Is there anything in this over-refined and supersubtle? It seems to me as clear as daylight, and admirably dramatic. At the beginning of the third act, the Princess asks her lady-in-waiting what can have been the reason of this perverse refusal. "I know," replies the sagacious Sorismonde, smiling ; "you had dreamed so long of this unseen lover that you shrank from subjecting your dream to the test of reality." "Yes, that must have been the reason, the only reason," says the Princess, delighted ; "and perhaps if Bertrand pleads the cause of his friend he may overcome my selfishness." Are you lost in the

mazes of this psychology? It is not the first time, surely, that we have heard of self-deception in love. Bertrand, recalled, tells the story of his friend's devotion, but Mélissinde has no ears save for what concerns himself. They are evidently falling deeper in love every moment; nevertheless, Mélissinde consents to go to the dying Rudel, and sends Bertrand to see if her galley is ready. When he is gone she realises that the temptation is not to be resisted—the temptation of seducing this man from his loyalty, and making him prove the strength of his passion by sacrificing to it the friend of his heart. "What woman is there," she asks, "who would not be

"Heureuse de tenir en ses bras un Oreste
Dont le Pylade meurt, qui le sait—et qui reste!"

When Bertrand returns, she tells him she cannot go to Rudel, for she loves another; and she has no difficulty in making Bertrand realise who that other is. "I am a disloyal knight!" he cries. "*Your* honour," she answers, "is safe." "No—for I felt a thrill of happiness!" It is the old story of Lancelot loved instead of Arthur, Tristram instead of Mark; but here the treachery is deeper, inasmuch as Rudel is languishing to death for this Guinevere-Isolde. His death is to be announced by the hoisting of a black sail on his galley in the roadstead; and Bertrand is haunted by the dread of seeing that sail. In vain the Princess

closes the stained-glass window to shut out the view of the harbour: they can think and talk of nothing else than the black sail; and presently a gust of wind blows the casement open again. "What matter!" cries *Mélistinde*. "Let us bury ourselves in the depths of our love. No one can be happy in this world who cannot blind himself to the open Window. There is always on the sea the barque of some dolorous duty, or, obstinately blotting the sunlight, the black sail of a remorse." Yes! they will look only in each other's eyes, and what can they know then of any black sail in the offing? But through the open casement comes the sound of voices. One fisherman on the shore cries to another, "Look! they have hoisted the black sail!"—and the horror of their cruelty has them in its grip. Now, frankly, is this symbolism so very recondite and incomprehensible? To me it seems no less simple and perspicuous than dramatic. But *M. Sarcey* will have none of it because—you will scarcely guess the reason—because we do not see the black sail with the eye of the flesh! It would have been all right, he says, "if the sudden opening of the window had revealed to the eyes of the public some object which, by its mere appearance, altered the face of the situation. But all these changes take place in the souls of the two personages"—and changes in the soul have, apparently, no interest for *M. Sarcey*. Such criticism fills one with some-

thing like terror. We are all fated, no doubt, to talk a certain amount of nonsense in the course of the day's work; but does one often (horrible thought!) serve it out undiluted in this wholesale fashion? To finish off the story, it appears that the black sail seen by the fisherman was that of the vessel conveying to Byzantium the defunct Chevalier aux Armes Vertes. The fatal sign has not yet appeared on Rudel's galley, and in a transport of compunction the Princess hurries to his side. She soothes his dying moments, scatters among his devoted crew the wealth which has oppressed her, sends them off, with Bertrand at their head, to fight for the Cross, and herself "takes the path which leads to Mount Carmel."

Does all this seem to you very childish? For my part, I hope I may never be sufficiently grown-up to lose my relish for such puerilities. While M. Sarcey declares himself baffled by the subtleties of M. Rostand's psychology, another eminent authority, nearer home, is outraged because the author does not burlesque his theme, and make the Princess "eat something, swear, or even smoke a cigarette." Of course you know who this authority is? No, you are wrong; it is not Mr. J. K. Jerome, but Mr. Bernard Shaw. What I admire about his criticism is its sublime disinterestedness. If dramatists were to follow Mr. Shaw's advice and invariably burlesque their ideals, his own occupation as a playwright would

be gone. Having invented the heroine who boxes her housemaid's ears, he makes no attempt to take out a patent for her and keep her to himself, but tries to force her upon the whole body of playwrights, saying, "all may grow the flower now, for all have got the seed." This is admirably consistent socialism, but somewhat narrow criticism. No doubt it would be capital sport to see the *Princesse Lointaine* played by Mr. Herbert Campbell in "rational dress" and with whisky in his smelling-bottle. But M. Rostand happened to be writing for Sarah Bernhardt; and, moreover, what pleased his imagination in the theme was precisely that the beautiful Princess should be beautiful. He has not, as we have seen, made her inhumanly good; there is a sufficient strain of perversity in her nature, and I fancy she is even capable of boxing her waiting-maid's ears if there were any occasion for it. But what seems totally to have escaped Mr. Shaw's observation is the fact that M. Rostand *does* treat his theme throughout with a delicate, playful irony. He smiles at his "silly Argonauts," though he does not flout and befool them; for he knows that the nympholepts of beauty are not wholly ridiculous, even if they should never see their "*Princesse Lointaine*," or only the hem of her garment. A genial humour plays round the whole poem, and if Mr. Shaw will look a little more closely into it, he will see that the author deliberately

bids for the laughter which seemed to his critic to threaten the very existence of the play. Can Mr. Shaw possibly fail to perceive that Sorismonde's "Il va mieux" and "Il va mieux, je vous dis," are intentionally comic points? I begin to wonder whether Mr. Shaw and I were not changed at birth. It seems to me that in relation to this piece of essentially Celtic humour and fantasy, I am the Irishman and he the Scot.

Madame Bernhardt chanted, or rather crooned, the part of Mélissinde to perfection. She was, in fact, playing her own character; for what is she but the Princess of a fairy-tale? An ordinary human being she no longer is or can be, but just such a creature of exquisite artifice as this Lady of Tripoli, clothed in jewels and exhaling rhymes. She spared us her utmost violences, relying chiefly on her languors; and her diction, her golden voice, gave just the right value to the tintinnabulations of M. Rostand's verse. Without pretending to share the delight which Frenchmen evidently feel in rhyme for rhyme's sake, I find it excusable, and even enjoyable, in fastasies such as this. M. Guitry as Bertrand looked more of a pirate than a troubadour, but spoke his lines with conviction and effect; and M. de Max as Rudel, the moment he got hold of a good tirade to deliver, proved himself a singularly robust invalid.

I have no space left in which to deal adequately

with *Die Ehre*, performed last week at Drury Lane by the Ducal Company of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.* Next week, after having seen *Heimat* in German, I may have something to say of Sudermann in general and these two plays in particular. In the meantime, let me bear testimony to the solid sufficiency, rising here and there to excellence, of the Coburg company. The Alma of Fräulein Linden was more than adequate; Herr Heimhof's Robert was forcible and sincere, if a little heavier than was strictly necessary; and Herr Weiss and Frau Wöisch as the Father and Mother proved themselves genuine comedians. The star of the evening, Herr Adolf Klein, from Berlin, played the romantic Graf Trast—a character ridiculous in itself, but so effective from the merely theatrical point of view that it affords no test of an actor's powers. Herr Klein has a commanding figure, a self-possessed manner, and knows how to make simple points with the requisite effect—more it is impossible to say from this single performance.

In *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, revived at the St. James's,† Miss Evelyn Millard succeeds Mrs. Patrick

* This company opened at Drury Lane, June 17, in *Der Vogelhändler*. *Die Ehre* was produced on the 18th, and *Heimat* on the 25th. The repertory was chiefly operatic. The dramatic portion of the company was subsequently transferred to the Savoy and gave a few performances, alternating with those of Eleonora Duse.

† June 20—July 3.

Campbell as Paula. Miss Millard's first act was singularly unsuccessful—like Mrs. Campbell's on the memorable first night of the play. Both ladies, no doubt, were paralysed by nervousness. As the piece went on, Miss Millard took firmer hold of the character. She put some genuine feeling into it, and she did not "play for the laugh" as both Mrs. Campbell and Mrs. Kendal insisted on doing. But, on the other hand, she forced the note a good deal at many points, and was sometimes even stagey. On the whole, it cannot be said that she made the character anything like so consistent and credible as did her predecessor.

XXXII.

THE ELIZABETHAN STAGE SOCIETY.

The New Budget, 27th June.

MAY I submit a verbal criticism to the consideration of the Elizabethan Stage Society, which gave a performance (its first, I understand) at the Burlington Hall, on Friday* last? The playbill set forth that "Shakspeare's Comedy, *Twelfth Night; or, What You Will*," was to be "Acted after the manner of the Sixteenth Century." Now, this is obviously inexact. The announcement ought to have read:

* June 21.

"Staged (more or less) after the manner of the Sixteenth Century; acted after the manner of the Nineteenth Century Amateur." Do not think that I am quibbling and pettifogging. The distinction is vital, though the Elizabethan Stage Society apparently ignores it. Perhaps you never heard of the E. S. S.? Permit me, then, to bring you acquainted with it. "The E. S. S.," says its prospectus, "is founded to give practical effect to the principle that Shakspeare should be accorded the build of stage for which he designed his plays. In Shakspeare's day," this document continues, "the best work of the best men was given to the drama, showing that the conditions which then obtained at the theatre were peculiarly adapted to the requirements of the dramatist. At no other period of English literature has this been the case. A theatre specially built on the plan of the Sixteenth Century would not be an expensive building; besides, with no scenery, and with no necessity to renew the costumes for every play, the bill can be changed at little cost. A subscription of one guinea constitutes membership for the year, which dates from the foundation of the Society to October 1, 1896, and then to each following first day of October. All interested in the work are invited to become members."

If you are anxious "to give practical effect to the principle" that Shakespeare should be played on

an arras-hung platform, with no scenery, and with Elizabethan costumes, make haste to send your guineas to the Hon. Sec., Mr. Arthur Dillon, 52 Talgarth Road, West Kensington. Far be it from me to discourage you. Elizabethanism is a very innocent game to play at, and, as the prospectus justly observes, comparatively inexpensive. But do not flatter yourself that you are doing any great service to Shakespeare in "according him the build of stage" for which he wrote. Until we can recover the build of actor he had in his mind, we are very little advanced; and even if that were possible, we should still be face to face with the stark impossibility of resuscitating the build of audience which was accustomed to "piece out with its thoughts" the imperfections of the naked platform whereon these actors strutted their hour. The true end to be aimed at is to make Shakespeare, and some dozen or fifteen plays of his contemporaries, really live for the modern playgoer; and this end can never be attained by a form of representation which appeals only to the dilettante and the enthusiast. The movement is really an outcome of the spirit which regards Shakespeare as a subject to be "worked at" rather than a poet to be enjoyed. Let us work at him by all means; but, so far as the stage is concerned, at any rate, let the whole bent of our work be towards unforced, unaffected, rational and national enjoyment.

With the negative tenets of the E. S. S. I heartily agree. Shakespeare is horribly maltreated on the modern commercial stage. We have seen, here and there, an isolated performance of great ability, but scarcely a single production in which expense did not predominate over intelligence, while the reasonable integrity and consecutiveness of the text had to yield to the convenience of the scene-painter and the machinist. But the mediæval schoolmen themselves recognised the fallacy in arguing from abuse to disuse. Because scenery is stupidly overdone, because archæology in costumes, arms, etc., is apt to run to pedantry and ostentation, we are forcibly to put back the clock, and, instead of refining a living art, make hopeless efforts to revive a dead one! For it is very dead indeed, the art of declamation that belonged to the rush-strewn boards of the noisy playhouses (many of them "public" or roofless) of Shakespeare's time. Even if we could revive it in the letter, it would remain dead in spirit; for it would not be to our ears what it was to the ears of the Elizabethan public. Nothing, we may be sure, could be more unlike it than the mild and self-conscious recitation of the amateurs who rally to the standard of the E. S. S. All things, of course, must have a beginning, and the Society may hope in time to convert its amateurs into actors. Sanguine Society! Little does it realise the severity of the apprenticeship that is necessary to

that end. But even supposing that here and there an exceptional talent, combined with exceptional diligence, attained something like real accomplishment, does the Society imagine that the rare bird would continue to twitter on its naked perch? No! the real actor would take to the real theatre like a duck to water. What artist can satisfy his soul with the meagre and factitious delights of dilettantism?

Let me not seem ungrateful or ungracious to the ladies and gentlemen (unnamed in the playbill) who went through *Twelfth Night* on the more or less sixteenth-century stage. The Viola was intelligent and pleasant, the Olivia had a handsome and expressive stage-face, the Maria was sprightly, the Antonio spoke well, and the Aguecheek was really excellent. I was particularly interested in timing the performance, to see whether they got it into the two hours so often mentioned by Elizabethan writers. They did, to a second. The first two acts took sixty-four minutes, the last three fifty-six. But I must observe that the Society did not act up to its principle of speaking the whole text. Though *Twelfth Night* is one of the shorter plays, they omitted some 250 out of its 2692 lines. Thirty or forty lines, perhaps, were cut as being objectionable to modern taste; the remainder for precisely the same reason for which Sir Henry Irving or Mr. Daly would cut them—because they seemed unnecessary and tedious. In this re-

spect, I am more of a purist than the E. S. S. In staging such a play as *Twelfth Night*, I would delete obscenities and a few comic passages which have lost all meaning for modern audiences, but I would not omit a single hemistich of Shakespeare's verse. If my actors could not speak it so as to make it interesting, I would e'en find other actors who could. The Society's whole reason for existence vanishes when it begins to flourish the blue pencil.

Here is the question in a nut-shell: Do appropriate scenery and costume help and stimulate the imagination of a theatrical audience? Emphatically, yes; and, on the other hand, glaring anachronism of costume, and the absence of any sort of pictorial background, tend to disconcert and hamper the imagination, and to distract attention from the matter of the play. That is my experience, and I believe it to be the experience of every one who takes his theatrical pleasures unaffectedly, and does not laboriously cultivate an æsthetic pose. *Twelfth Night*, it must be remembered, is not a fair test case. Being fantastic in scene and period, it may as well be acted in Elizabethan costume as in any other; and it is one of the plays which are least dependent on scenery. Let the E. S. S. act *Julius Cæsar* in Elizabethan dress, and tell me that the effect is not ludicrous! Let them put *As You Like It* on their arras-hung platform, and tell me that the lack of the woodland

setting matters nothing! Even in the fantastic plays, I see no reason why, without archæological pedantry, a pleasant variety of costume should not be aimed at. And as for scenery, it is quite a mistake to suppose that the mechanism of the modern stage necessitates a high-handed re-arrangement of the text. It is as easy to change a scene as to draw a "traverse." Because some managers make foolish sacrifices for the sake of built-up "sets," I do not see that we need abjure all pictorial pleasure to the eye and assistance to the imagination.

The long run is at the bottom of the whole mischief. Let the Elizabethan Stage Society subscribe, agitate, and toil for a repertory theatre, neither managed by an actor nor "backed" by a profit-seeking capitalist, and I am with it, heart and soul. It is because I think they are diverting valuable energy into a mistaken channel that I take up an almost hostile attitude towards experiments which, in themselves, are harmless and interesting. When we have a theatre with a constitution and an ideal, where Shakespeare's masterpieces, comic and tragic, are on the standing repertory, and even his less vital works are passed in review from time to time—then we may build alongside of it a small Elizabethan Playhouse for purposes of rehearsal and experiment. But an Elizabethan Playhouse, by itself, can never be the popular institution we want, and may quite well attain if we go the right

way about it. Bare-back riding is excellent, perhaps indispensable, practice; but it is in the saddle that the accomplished rider "witches the world with noble horsemanship."

XXXIII.

SUDERMANN—"MISS BROWN"—"THE RAILROAD OF LOVE."

3rd July.

WHAT I said about Sudermann a week or two ago was, I am aware, a trifle negative. To explain wherein a writer differs from Ibsen is not to get quite at the heart of his mystery. A demonstration, however conclusive, that Monmouth is not Macedon, would scarcely serve as a guide-book to Monmouth. Putting Ibsen out of the question—he really has very little to do in this galley—we want to know where the author of *Die Ehre* and *Heimat* stands in the ordinary dramatic movement of the day. We want to "place" him in relation to Dumas and Sardou, to Pinero and Jones, to his own compatriot Hauptmann—in brief, to the men who keep the theatrical ball rolling here and elsewhere. For my part, I find it curiously difficult to get the bearings of his talent. I feel that I ought to admire him a great deal more than I do. Again and again, when some instance of his

cleverness compels intellectual recognition, I take the temperature of my feeling towards him; but the mercury obstinately declines to register anything like fever-heat.

Strength he has beyond a doubt, else not even Duse could achieve such tremendous effects in his work; and he is by no means devoid of insight and subtlety. He has the knack, an invaluable one, of seizing upon themes of large significance. In *Die Ehre* he shows how, under existing social conditions, "honour" is a luxury for the rich, and, as commonly understood, a deleterious luxury to boot. He might have found a motto for his play in Boswell's *Johnson*, under the date September 22nd, 1777, when Boswell and his hero were together at Ashbourne: "A gentleman farmer said, 'A poor man has as much honour as a rich man.' Johnson exclaimed, 'A poor man has no honour!'" Robert and Graf Trast in the play exactly reproduce this passage; it is the cornerstone of the dramatic structure. The theme of *Sodoms Ende* is artist-worship, the doctrine that genius is a law unto itself, and the noxious Byronism which is apt to result from such a doctrine. The satire is more relevant, perhaps, in Germany than here. Our national temperament ensures us against wild orgies of idealism; our very language affords no adequate equivalent for the German *Schwärmerei*. Still, the subject is a good one, taken straight from

life, not from the common theatrical storehouse. In *Heimat*, again, one of the great, ever-recurrent conflicts of life is treated with a fine directness—the conflict of the old with the new, of authority with individuality, of the parent with the child. There is no doubt, then, that this man has the root of the matter in him. He shows the very age and body of the time, its form and pressure. His range of vision is more comprehensive than that of Dumas, for instance, or of Mr. Pinero, so far as he has yet gone in serious drama. He does not keep his studies all on one plane—that of upper middle-class life—but sinks a shaft through several social strata. In these three plays he has painted in some detail five different “environments”: in *Die Ehre*, the plutocracy and the proletariat of a great commercial centre; in *Sodoms Ende*, wealthy Bohemianism and poverty-stricken respectability; in *Heimat*, the official and military middle-class Puritanism of a provincial town. More than any, perhaps, of his French or English contemporaries, he has the art of setting his ethical problems in pictures drawn direct from life. And in his execution there is a great deal that is admirable. The low-life scenes of *Die Ehre* are probably the best things he has yet done. They combine the irony of Maupassant with the humanity of Dickens. There is nothing quite so original in his later work; but everywhere he shows a striking gift of dramatic rhetoric—of keeping his

dialogue true to life, yet so manipulating it as to bring all the facets of his theme, one after another, into sudden and brilliant prominence. Furthermore, without exceeding reasonable limits of length, he has the knack of getting a great deal of matter into his plays. They are no mere dramatic skeletons, but have plenty of flesh and blood on their bones. They give one no sense of undue or artificial compression. Sudermann has succeeded in making himself a dramatist without entirely renouncing the rights and immunities of the novelist.

Why, then, does a writer of such power and originality fail to stir one to anything like enthusiasm? Why does he not take a foremost place among the interests and influences of theatrical life? It is four years since I read his first two plays—why (I ask myself) have I felt no inclination to say anything about him, until the polyglot performances of *Heimat* forced the subject upon me? Why am I content to remain in total ignorance of his last play, *The Battle of the Butterflies*, or something to that effect? Why does he leave me so incurious? Something there must be lacking in him (I prefer to assume that the want is on his side); and that something, I am inclined to think, is *distinction*. Perhaps his language is partly at fault. German is a noble language for poetry, but German colloquial prose, compared with French or English, is as sackcloth to

silk. This, however, is a mere expression of prejudice; if Sudermann's lack of distinction lay only in his idiom, it would be mere impertinence to reproach him with it. But I seem to find a certain commonness of texture in his whole method. He is obstinately prosaic; there is no grace, no elevation, no inspiration (if I may put it so) in his character-drawing; and, behind his satire, one more than suspects a strain of commonplace idealism. His technique, though in some ways it has greatly improved since he wrote *Die Ehre*, remains exceedingly obvious. In each of his plays he has a "reasoner," whose business it is to "moralise the spectacle"—the egregious Graf Trast in *Die Ehre*, Riemann in *Sodoms Ende*, Pastor Hefferdingk in *Heimat*. He disguises his "reasoner" better as time goes on; at first sight, indeed, Pastor Hefferdingk looks almost like an integral part of the play; but, if you look into it, you will find that he is only a piece of rather clumsy mechanism for bringing about the requisite changes in Magda's frame of mind—changes which, after all, remain very unconvincing. I am not sure that I do not really prefer the splendidly sententious Trast to the smug and seraphic Hefferdingk. The Count was a sin of youth, the Pastor is a crime of maturity. There is something specious about him which cleverly disguises the essential commonness of the conception—but common it is, both from the intellectual and the

technical point of view. No ! up to the date of *Heimat*, Sudermann was not an artist of the first order.

He is exceedingly fortunate in his interpreters. You may now see almost every part in *Heimat* played to perfection at the Savoy Theatre; but, unfortunately, you will have to go twice. If you must choose between the German and the Italian versions, by all means select the latter; for Duse's Magda is a thing unique and unapproachable, a thing you may not see again in a lifetime. I think she is a little too loud in the scene with Schwartz in the last act; she would get a truer effect, and, I believe, a stronger one as well, with less expenditure of physical energy. The fact is, she succumbs to the temptation of the star, and takes the whole scene to herself, reducing Schwartz's share in it to a minimum, and thus destroying the balance and verisimilitude of the thing. But even where she is wrong she is superbly wrong, and where she is right she is incomparably right and beautiful. In *La Femme de Claude* and *Heimat*, even more than in her other performances, Duse has once for all enlarged my conception of the possibilities of dramatic expression. But if you can possibly manage it, do not fail to see the German *Heimat* as well, for Herr Adolf Klein's performance of Schwartz is as masterly in its way as Duse's Magda. It is a really luminous piece of acting; it throws a new light on the character and the whole

play. Herr Klein emphasises and renders convincing what the French and Italian actors slurred—the physical infirmity of the old martinet. I never saw on the stage a more minute and faithful pathological study. The tremor of paralysis any one can imitate; but this actor had seized and reproduced to perfection the pained expression of face, the accesses of mental confusion, when ideas and words seem to slip hopelessly away, the struggle to recover them, and the resultant irritability and restlessness. And this senility went far to explain and excuse the character. It explained, at any rate, the total lack of tact and common sense in the old man's behaviour towards his daughter; and it accounted in some degree, though certainly not adequately, for the extraordinary submissiveness with which she consented to renounce her liberty and pass under the yoke. It was not his strength but his weakness that cowed her—not the power, but the pathos, of his behests. One felt that it was immoral on Magda's part, but not quite unnatural, to succumb to this tyranny of second childhood. Such acting is truly creative art. The actor becomes the collaborator of the author and in the truest sense his interpreter. The German Magda, Frl. Wienrich, is unfortunately very inadequate; but Frl. Linden makes a charming Marie, Herr Heimhoff is good as Von Keller, and the minor parts are quite competently filled.

The Strange Adventures of Miss Brown, a farce by Messrs. Robert Buchanan and Charles Marlowe, produced at the Vaudeville last week,* amused the audience hugely, and in so far fulfilled its purposes. It is an ingenuous attempt to run *Charlie's Aunt* and *The New Boy* into one; but it is not nearly so clever as either of these farces, and quite as vulgar as both of them together. Still, as aforesaid, it went merrily enough, thanks to the bright acting of Miss May Palfrey and Miss Esmé Beringer, and the red wig of Mr. Frederick Kerr. Mr. Kerr's character called for no art whatever, except that of looking foolish—a task in which he succeeded to admiration. Mr. Lionel Brough, Mr. John Beauchamp, and Miss Gladys Homfrey also contributed to the success of the production.

A perfectly empty, exceedingly pleasant play is *The Railroad of Love*,† with which "Augustin Daly's Company of Comedians" (as the playbill hath it) opened their eighth season in London. An imbroglio that would make a trivial enough single act is spun out over four; yet so good-humoured is the whole thing, and so clever the acting, that one does not tire of it—much. When it was acted before, at the Gaiety, I remember speaking of Miss Rehan's "swan-like Valentine Osprey." "Swan-like" is now scarcely

* June 20. Transferred to Terry's, October 7—still running.

† Daly's Theatre, June 25—July 1.

the word; but Cousin Val is none the less charming for being a little more opulent in her contours. Miss Rehan seems to be in excellent form, and one looks forward with lively anticipation to her Julia and her Helena. Mr. Frank Worthing, though handicapped by our reminiscences of his predecessor in the part, makes a passable Lieutenant Everett, and Mr. James Lewis and Mrs. Gilbert are as amiable and delightful as ever. I don't mind confessing that I lost my heart to Mrs. Gilbert eleven years ago, and have never wavered in my devotion.

XXXIV.

"THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA"—"MA
COUSINE."

10th July.

THE Elizabethan Stage Society should appoint Mr. Augustin Daly its Honorary President, or confer on him whatever most signal distinction lies in its power; for he is unwearied in giving object-lessons in support of its tenets. This confraternity (need I explain?) is of opinion that Shakespeare ought to be recited word for word and scene for scene on a bare platform, reproducing as nearly as possible the arras-hung stage of the sixteenth century. Mr. Daly is apparently

of the same opinion, for he does all he can to reduce to absurdity the opposite doctrine, which would treat the classic drama as a mere pretext for scenery and spectacle. He revives Shakespeare as Medea revived Æson—by cutting him up and boiling him down. Now, I am not going to pretend that in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona** this matters very much. The play is not an immortal masterpiece which it is sacrilege to dismember and bedevil. One can more easily forgive Mr. Daly all his hacking about of *The Two Gentlemen* than the single enormity (in which Sir Henry Irving preceded him) of opening *Twelfth Night* with any other line than that which strikes the keynote of the comedy: "If music be the food of love, play on." But to forgive is one thing, to approve another; the principle is radically false. In itself, the earlier play suffers quite as much as the later and greater, though, holding it in less affection, we less keenly resent its maltreatment. Indeed, Mr. Daly has jumbled up the scenes even more wantonly than usual, hoping, perhaps, that we purists (how he must despise us!) would be less on the alert in this case than in some others. Let me give one or two instances of the superiority of Mr. Daly's construction to Shakespeare's.

Nothing could be simpler than the three scenes of Shakespeare's first act, or easier to put on the stage

* Daly's, July 2—July 8.

intact. First we have a front scene, a street in Verona, for the parting of Valentine and Proteus; it opens and reveals a garden for the scene between Julia and Lucetta; then the front scene closes again (either the same exterior as before, or an interior—the localities are not defined in the Folio) for Antonio's resolution to send his son abroad; and Proteus's reception of his command. Note that the garden-scene might be as elaborate as Mr. Daly's heart could desire, and that he need by no means stint himself of the irrelevant but gorgeously-attired ladies whom he justly considers so decorative. One might almost fancy that Shakespeare, in this case, had anticipated every reasonable requirement of the modern manager. Not a bit of it! What did poor dear Shakespeare know of an effective "curtain"? It would never do to bring down your act-drop on a carpenter-scene, and let your leading man instead of your leading lady have the last word. Miss Rehan must end the act, that's positive; so the three scenes are reduced to two, the first half of Shakespeare's Scene 3 being tagged on to Scene 1, with the result that five minutes after Valentine has taken leave of Proteus on that very spot, Panthino speaks of him as already at the Emperor's Court. There is also the further happy result that the curtain falls upon Miss Rehan speaking the conclusion of Julia's soliloquy, with lavish gestures, straight over the footlights, as

though the line, "Now kiss, embrace, contend, do what you will," were not addressed to the fragments of the torn letter, but were a direct exhortation to the audience. If Shakespeare had known his business well enough to bring down his curtain at this point, he would also have seen the necessity of giving Julia a good speech to fling at the audience; therefore (Mr. Daly no doubt argues) the actress is fully justified in disregarding the plain sense of the passage and converting it into meaningless claptrap. Then, the latter half of Shakespeare's Act I., Scene 3, becomes the beginning of Mr. Daly's Act II., Scene 1, Shakespeare's Act II., Scene 2 being added to it, so that the parting of Proteus and Julia follows immediately on the receipt by Proteus of his marching orders. Here the last words of Proteus are transferred to Julia, it being Mr. Daly's principle that Shakespeare may think himself lucky if he gets his words spoken at all, and must not be too particular as to who happens to speak them. Next we have Shakespeare's Act II., Scene 1 and Scene 4, run together, so that Silvia must needs make her entrance attended by three ladies and Thurio, who stand listening in silence to the pretty passage between Valentine and Silvia beginning "Madam and mistress, a thousand good-morrows." Shakespeare, poor fellow, intended the lovers to be alone (save for Speed, overhearing) when the lady makes her ingeniously-veiled declara-

tion; but Mr. Daly sees no reason why she should not make it under the very nose of her other suitor. When he mounts *Romeo and Juliet* he will no doubt bring on the Nurse and the County Paris in the balcony scene, just in case the lovers should feel lonely. But why protract the catalogue of Mr. Daly's achievements? He cannot even let the play leave off when it is finished, but must rush to the other end of Shakespeare's career, seize upon the epilogue to *Henry VIII.*, and foist it on to the *Two Gentlemen*! Beside such high-handed rearrangements, mere excisions sink into insignificance; but Mr. Daly has certainly not been sparing in his slashes. Many a pretty and effective passage must go by the board in order to make room for songs, dances, barges gliding over moonlit waters, and other delights of that order. In short, I must say again, as I have said before, that Mr. Daly goes on precisely the wrong principle, in trying how much instead of how little he can alter the text of Shakespeare.

It was not to be expected that such a representation, or indeed any representation, should throw much new light on the inherent qualities of the play. Of all Shakespeare's works, it is perhaps the most trivial and experimental. It exemplifies his manner apart from his substance, and contains the rough drafts of several scenes and characters which he subsequently developed with great effect. Its charm

lies not in its "two gentlemen," but in its two ladies. In Julia and Silvia there is really a foretaste of Shakespeare's later, subtler, and nobler women. Valentine and Proteus are the merest outlines, marred by reckless psychological inconsequences; and the wit of the serving-men is schoolboyish beyond belief, and often beyond understanding. In cutting witticisms which were never witty, and which now require a page of commentary to render them barely comprehensible, Mr. Daly has my fullest sympathy. Miss Rehan's Julia is a charming performance, which would have been more charming still had she had Shakespeare's character instead of Mr. Daly's to study and realise. Miss Rehan is coming more and more to abound in her own sense, or, in other words, is lapsing into a sort of peculiar and seductive staginess. This is no doubt inevitable in an actress of her personality and temperament. I record the fact; I do not reproach her with it. She speaks her verse, for the most part, delightfully, though she now and then baffles the ear with inarticulate interjections, and her phrasing is not always perfect. For instance, she introduces a heavy monotony into the spirited and beautiful line, "Unto a ragged, fearful-hanging rock," by the simple process of speaking the compound epithet "fearful-hanging" as though it were two separate adjectives "fearful, hanging." At the end of her eavesdropping scene in the fourth act, I

was astonished to hear Julia say (unless my ears grossly deceived me),

“it hath been the longest night
That e’er I watched, and most the heaviest.”

“What!” I thought, “is the American ‘most,’ in the sense of ‘almost,’ another survival from Elizabethan English? Was it, too, imported in the *Mayflower*, along with so many other reputed Americanisms?” Alas! on turning to the text I found that what Shakespeare wrote was not “most the heaviest,” but “the most heaviest.” Mr. Frank Worthing is rather a saturnine and declamatory Proteus, Mr. John Craig, as Valentine, having much more of the spirit of comedy in him. Mr. James Lewis makes a quaint Launce, and Mr. Herbert Gresham a rather monotonous Speed. Mr. Gresham’s whole art of comic expression seems to lie in opening his eyes very wide—perhaps in the effort to see the point of Speed’s jokes. Miss Maxine Elliot made a handsome Silvia, and Miss Sibyl Carlisle a pleasant Lucetta.

Various reasons are given to account for the lack of enthusiasm with which *Ma Cousine* was received on its first night at the Garrick.* It is said that Madame Réjane had not recovered from the fatigues

* July 1. Madame Réjane performed *Ma Cousine* eight times (six nights and two matinées), and *Madame Sans-Gêne* the same number of times.

of her journey, and that she was disconcerted by modifications of Meilhac's text demanded at the last moment by the ever-vigilant Mr. Redford. What they can have been I am at a loss to guess. The leopard did not seem to me to have changed his spots at the omnipotent behest. Mr. Redford may no doubt have whitewashed one or two of them, but the effect was not perceptible to the naked eye; nor can I believe that our national morals were rescued from sudden ruin by these poor little dabs of size. However, Mr. Redford no doubt felt it incumbent upon him to give some sign of life, and he seems to have done his spiriting very gently. I wonder if he demanded a special rehearsal in order to restrain Riquette's *chahut* (or whatever is the technical term) within the limits of propriety? Be this as it may, I do not believe that either Mr. Redford or the Atlantic Ocean was responsible for the lukewarmness of the public, but simply the fact that they did not understand a good deal of *Ma Cousine*, and what they did understand they did not much care about. To tell the truth, I see no particular reason why we should go into raptures over such trivial caricatures of Parisian manners. To do so would be to take up a curiously provincial attitude towards the "ville lumière." There is no ingenuity of invention in Meilhac's play, and in the character-drawing there is as little as may be of general humanity. The

thing is a satiric sketch of manners and customs which are absolutely peculiar to a certain very limited district in the Department of the Seine. This is parochial art if you like; and the parish concerned does not happen to be our parish. We have, indeed, a certain knowledge of, and relish for, its peculiar habits of thought and speech, and we affect a good deal more than we really have; but both the knowledge and the affectation are the result of a sort of provincial dependency which one would like to feel that we are outgrowing. Frenchmen do not, and we do not expect them to, devour our Anthony Hope or Anstey. Why should we profess an inexhaustible relish for their Meilhac, when he is content to be merely the small-beer chronicler of corners of Parisian society? I have no doubt that, despite these John Bullish sentiments, I should read *Ma Cousine* with a great deal of pleasure; for wit is wit, be it never so Parisian. But there were no books of the play available, and I am bound to own (speaking simply for myself) that many of the more delicate—or indelicate—points in the dialogue escaped me. As for Madame Réjane's performance, it seemed to me a piece of accomplished comedy, with touches of exaggeration here and there, but otherwise quite admirable. At the same time, there was nothing in the creation to impress itself very deeply on the memory, or to place the actress quite on the pinnacle

which some critics claim for her. We must see her in a character of greater solidity than either Riquette or Madame Sans-Gêne—in Porto-Riche's *Amoureuse* or Ibsen's *Nora*—before we can really estimate the range of her talent.

XXXV.

"A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM."

17th July.

PLEASURE first, duty afterwards; it is a pleasure to thank Mr. Daly for what he has done, before remonstrating with him for what he has left undone. There is much—very much—to enjoy in his revival of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.* I have seen it twice, and I enjoyed it more the second time than the first—probably because I was prepared in advance for the inadequacies and stupidities of the performance, and was therefore able to concentrate my attention on its beauties. No doubt, too, the delight of my companion on the second occasion—a boy of ten—was in some degree contagious. It was better than a pantomime to him; and this I say without any sort of sneer. It was better because it was

* July 9—July 27. *Nancy & Co.* was presented on July 29 and 30, and the season closed on July 31 with *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

fundamentally beautiful. Had the poem been simply vulgarised, I should have been very careful not to let him see it. He clearly felt, though he could not have explained, the difference between this harmoniously-developed fable and the travestied nurserytales of Christmastide, between these exquisite verses (some of them beautifully spoken) and the doggerel patter of the pantomime librettist. What was vulgar and pantomimic in the production pleased him less than the rest, or not at all. Mr. Clarke's Theseus he could not away with; the pantomime mask which Mr. Daly has substituted for the elfin Mustard-seed simply puzzled him in its incongruity; and his remark on the famous "panoramic illusion" was, "It only makes you dizzy." Now the public, I take it, is in these matters simply a child of larger growth: it feels a great deal that it cannot explain or express, even to itself. Mr. Daly regards us critics as a set of visionary, if not malicious, pedants, because we worry over his cuts and transpositions, and are careful and cumbered about syllables and accents. "What does the public know or care about these things?" he asks. "If I cut half-a-dozen lines here and there, who misses them? Not one person in a hundred. And if a syllable or two is omitted or inserted in a blank verse line, do you suppose that the public notices it?" In these cases, it is true, only a small percentage of any given audience knows what is

wrong, or is even clearly conscious that there is anything wrong at all; but it does not therefore follow that, even from the practical, managerial, dollars-and-cents point of view, the errors are not worth putting right. The manager's aim is, and must be, to give the largest possible sum of pleasure to his audience; and if he cuts or maltreats a beautiful passage which would have given pleasure, he in so far diminishes that sum, even though not one of his audience may distinctly realise the loss. The resultant impression of such a performance is made up of an innumerable host of small sensations. Every line, to carry the analysis no further, may, or rather must, produce in the hearer one of three conditions: satisfaction, indifference, or dissatisfaction. Now, Mr. Daly will surely admit that a line spoken as Shakespeare wrote it has a better chance of making the needle veer towards "Satisfaction" than one stupidly or carelessly misspoken. If it be delivered with grace and feeling, it will send the mental indicator of those who are sensitive to these things flying to the extreme of "Satisfaction"—to delight—and it will give a vague pleasure even to the unskilful. Misspoken, on the other hand, it will at best leave the indicator at "Indifference" in the unskilful, while in those who know (and, after all, there are *some* people with an ear for verse in every audience) it will deflect the needle more or less

violently on the side of "Dissatisfaction," not to say disgust. This is not a matter in which, by pleasing the few, you run the risk of displeasing the many. No one actively prefers a bad line to a good, though many may not see the difference or may be unable to explain it. For instance, when Mr. Daly suffers Mr. George Clarke to say, "The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling," not a soul in the audience is pleased, while many are tortured, by the omission of the single letter "a." For my part, it makes my hand steal towards my pistol-pocket; for I feel that, unlike the musician at whom the Western audience was requested not to shoot, the actor is *not* "doing his best." If he does not know the difference between verse and prose, he might at least mechanically memorise the plain words of his part. And let not Mr. Daly think this a trifling matter. That single inexcusable blunder might quite well prove the last straw to a sensitive playgoer, and send him away with a general impression of dissatisfaction which, spreading among his friends and acquaintances, would keep out of the treasury an indefinite number of half-crowns and half-sovereigns.

On the whole, Mr. Daly has dealt not ungently with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. His transpositions are inessential, and his excisions are not so inhuman as they are apt to be. In the main, he lets Shakespeare tell his story in his own way; and that

is all we ask. But though Mr. Daly has not been so truculent in his slashing as he sometimes is, many priceless lines and passages have fallen before his blue pencil. There is much in a name, and *Daly* is fatally suggestive of *Dele*. How could he find it in his heart, for instance, to mutilate this passage :

Lysander. Ah, me ! for ought that ever I could read,
 Could ever hear by tale or history,
 The course of true love never did run smooth :
 But, either it was different in blood ;

Hermia. O cross ! too high to be enthralld to low !

Lys. Or else misgraffed, in respect of years ;

Her. O spite ! too old to be engag'd to young !

Lys. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends :

Her. O hell ! to choose love by another's eye !

Lys. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
 War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it.

Will it be believed that Mr. Daly cuts all these silver-sweet antiphonies, making Lysander say, "The course of true love never did run smooth. For, if there were a sympathy in choice," etc.? A little further on Hermia is robbed of the lines printed in inverted commas :

I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow ;
 ' By his best arrow with the golden head ;
 ' By the simplicity of Venus' doves ;'
 By that which knitteth souls, and prospers loves ;
 ' And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,
 ' When the false Trojan under sail was seen.'

I presume it is from motives of delicacy that this speech of Oberon's is docked of its last four lines, the most magnificent in the whole play:

“How canst thou thus, for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
From Perigenia, whom he ravished?
And make him with fair Ægle break his faith,
With Ariadne, and Antiopa?”

Immediately after, the whole of Titania's description of the rains and floods disappears without a trace—an excrescence on the play, no doubt, but a curious and beautiful one. True, it would have needed an actress to speak it. There is more justification for some (but not for all) of the deletions in the lovers' quarrelling scenes. Passages so “conceited” in style as to baffle the comprehension of a modern audience may fairly be omitted; but this principle does not apply to Helena's

“We, Hermia, like to artificial gods,
Have with our needs created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,” etc.

At a low estimate, I should say that two-thirds of Mr. Daly's cuts are quite unnecessary, while of these, again, a full third is positively detrimental. In several briefer passages, he makes unaccountable havoc of the text. For instance, where Shakespeare wrote:

"Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,
The rest I'd give to be to you translated,"

Mr. Daly makes Miss Rehan say :

"Were the world mine, it would I give
To be to you transformed."

Where the original texts mar the metre, Mr. Daly at once becomes a purist. He will have Oberon say, "Quite overcanopied with *luscious* woodbine," rejecting Theobald's obvious and beautiful conjecture of *lush*. Countless are the places in which he suffers his actors to ignore the accentuation obviously demanded by the measure. For instance: *Hermia*. "It stands as an édict in destiny" (it should, of course, be "edíct"). *Puck*. "She never had so sweet a chanjling" (instead of the trisyllable, "changéling"). *Hermia*. "Lysander! What! removèd! Lysander! Lord!" (instead of "remov'd"—as, indeed, it is printed in the Folio). In both places where the name of Philostrate occurs, the metre makes it abundantly evident that Shakespeare pronounced it *Philostrait*; in both places Mr. Daly must needs have it *Philóstratee*. Lysander says to Helena, "Farewell, sweet playfellow; pray thou *for* us," thus ruining the line and disguising the rhyme with the following line, "And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius." Even in the "tedious brief scene" of *Pyramus and Thisbe* it would surely be worth

while to let Wall say, what Shakespeare indisputably intended :

“ And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper,”

instead of accenting “sinister” on the first syllable, according to modern usage. These, to be sure, are small matters; but it is as easy to be right as wrong, and every wrong accentuation, while it gives no satisfaction to any one, inflicts on many a very appreciable dissatisfaction. And in no case, observe, have I noted a mere momentary slip of the tongue on the actor’s part. These are all, so to speak, rehearsed errors, for which Mr. Daly is responsible. I am willing to believe that it was by a slip of the tongue that Mr. Clarke, the other night, said, “The lover, the lunatic, and the poet,” instead of “The lunatic, the lover,” etc.; but such slips would be impossible to any one with the slightest ear for verse.

With the exception of the “panoramic illusion of the passage of the Barge of Theseus to Athens,” the mounting was passable. The Pompeiian interior of the first act was a trifle garish, and the caryatids of the last act seemed somewhat elephantine; but the forest scene was really pretty and tasteful. The “panoramic illusion” was justly jeered at by the first-night gallery. An ambidextrous barge (propelled, that is to say, by a motionless steering-oar at bow and stern alike) was seen threading its way, obviously on

dry land, through an epileptic forest, jerked spasmodically along like a freight-train in the act of shunting. And for the sake of this childish and contemptible effect, Theseus and Hippolyta were made to perform a sort of egg-dance among the sleeping lovers, pretending not to see them until the cue came for recovering their eyesight. Mr. Daly is the only person illuded by this "panoramic illusion." In the fairy-scenes, again, the disorderly and meaningless flashing and fading of the electric lamps in the fairies' wands and hair seemed to me far more disturbing than pretty. Surely these scintillations should be subjected to some rule, however fantastic or conventional. We instinctively look for some "natural law in the spiritual world." Beings who have this faculty of luminance must be conceived to employ it to some end, probably of emotional expression. Either the jewels should glow continuously, or, if they flash and fade, they should do so, not higgledy-piggledy, but with meaning and appropriateness—pulsing, not merely fluttering. As it is, when Oberon says, "I am invisible," he seizes the opportunity to blaze forth like the Eddystone light. If the trick had been reversed—if the Faery King had been radiant throughout the scene, and then suddenly eclipsed his fires—one could have applauded Mr. Daly's ingenuity. At the very least, when the fairies are singing Titania's lullaby, their phosphorescence might surely follow the

rhythm of the song instead of flitting and flickering in chaotic discordance.

Where Mr. Daly gives her unmutated lines to speak, Miss Rehan, as Helena, croons her verses very beautifully. She makes a noble and memorable figure. The one thing I regret in her performance is a sudden lapse into schoolgirl Americanism at the line, "Nor longer stay in your curst company." Miss Maxine Elliott, too, as Hermia, looks singularly handsome, and speaks with intelligence and feeling. Mr. Frank Worthing and Mr. John Craig play Demetrius and Lysander quite creditably, though Mr. Worthing is a little careless of his words. It is really cruel of Mr. Daly to cast Mr. George Clarke for Theseus. He was ludicrous enough as Richard Cœur de Lion; under the huge helmet and in the cherry-coloured cloak of Theseus he is simply grotesque. Of his treatment of the text I have already given some specimens. Mr. Tyrone Power is good as Egeus, in spite of his Father-Christmas-like make-up. Miss Sibyl Carlisle makes a graceful and fairly intelligent Oberon; but Titania and Hippolyta simply cease to exist in the hands of Miss Percy Haswell and Miss Leontine. Miss Lillian Swain, as Puck, is conventional and nothing more. The clowning of the Athenian amateurs has at least the merit of being irresistibly funny. Mr. James Lewis as Bottom is mercurial rather than stolid; but, after all, there is

nothing in the text to exclude this reading of the character. Nevertheless, I cannot think him so consummate in this part as he was in Sir Toby Belch.

XXXVI.

"ALL ABROAD"—"QWONG HI."

14th August.

FOUR persons, according to the playbill, are implicated in the confection of *All Abroad*, successfully produced at the Criterion last Thursday.* The piece is "by Owen Hall and James T. Tanner"; and underneath we read, in much smaller letters, "Music by Fredk. Rosse. Lyrics by W. H. Risque." In the theatrical world, credit and cash are commonly apportioned in accordance with the size of type in which a man's name appears in the bills, so that Messrs. Owen Hall and James T. Tanner probably carry off not only the laurels but the lion's share of the emoluments arising from *All Abroad*. If this be so, they profit by an inveterate superstition, or rather by a false classification. The piece is called a "musical farce," and because "farce" is the substantive, "musical" the adjective, it is assumed that the plot

* August 7—November 2. Revived at Court Theatre, January 2, 1896.

and dialogue form the substance of the show, the songs being a mere embellishment. Reverse the parts of speech and with them the emphasis, call the piece a "farcical operetta," and at once the haughty and majuscular "authors" would sink into the humble and small-typed "librettists"—and librettists, moreover, who do not write their own rhymes. This is the true proportion in the division of labour. The success of the production lies entirely in the rhymes and jingles—"music" is too large a word for this context—in the pretty faces of the ladies, and the clowning of the comedians. The "authors," in the present instance, have furnished the title and the tedium, and very little more. "What!" they will no doubt protest, "have we not invented the melomaniac solicitor, and the ward in Chancery, and the *café-chantant* divette who turns out to be her long-lost sister, and the tuneful tar who marries the ward in Chancery, and the effervescent champagne-brewer, and the dwarf office-boy whose antics the audience found so agreeable? Have we not, in the course of arduous literary researches, exhumed from a forgotten romance of antiquity the idea of the amorous attorney who dyes his hair green? Have we not lavishly be-gemmed the dialogue with such sparkling facetiæ as these: 'She has gone for a ride on a bicycle.' 'On a what, sir?' 'No, not on a whatsir, on a bicycle. It is india-rubber tyred.' 'I don't care how tired it

is'? All this, and more besides, we have done; and yet you tell us we have furnished only the title and the tedium!" Precisely; I said the tedium. And, mark you, not for me alone, but for the audience at large. No human soul takes the slightest interest in the plot, the characters, or the situations of *All Abroad*. Why, the authors themselves (and small blame to them!) are perpetually losing the thread of the story and picking it up again—the same thread or another, it matters not—after twenty minutes or so of sheer irrelevance. The so-called play is only the rough canvas on which the really attractive features of the entertainment are elaborately embroidered, by the song-writer, composer, costumier, stage-manager, and comedians. This canvas any one could provide—any one, that is to say, who could sufficiently divest his mind of all misplaced hankerings after wit, coherence, or comic originality.

A curious fatality besets the modern English stage. Every now and then, a more or less novel and interesting style of play is evolved, imperfect and tentative enough, yet seeming to contain the possibilities, and even the promise, of better things. We hail such appearances with delight, and look eagerly for the development of the new art-form. Alas! it invariably makes haste to develop backwards; it withers before it has bloomed; it shows a marvellous alacrity in sinking. Planché started a gay and grace-

ful form of extravaganza; it degenerated the moment it left his hands, to end ingloriously in three-act Gaiety burlesque and the vulgarities of spectacular pantomime. Robertsonian comedy was an invention in its way; but—as M. Auguste Filon has just been reminding us in his singularly well-informed articles in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*—it culminated during Robertson's own brief day of success, and then dwindled into puerility and ineptitude. Some twelve or fifteen years ago, Mr. Sims and Mr. Jones seemed for a moment to have put new life into popular drama. If they, or other writers, had gradually dropped the mechanical and conventional parts of *The Lights o' London* and *The Silver King*, and worked steadily along the line of observation, humour and character-study, they would have arrived in time at the unpretending but really artistic “folk-play” which is the most popular form of drama in Germany and, I believe, in America. Mr. Jones did, indeed, make one or two efforts in that direction (for example, *The Middleman*), but presently devoted himself entirely to society drama; while Mr. Sims lost no time in joining hands with the practitioners of East-end melodrama, and glissading down into the depths of mechanical stage-carpentry. Then, again, the Gilbert and Sullivan movement has ended (for the present) where it began—in Gilbert and Sullivan. They have had plenty of inferior imitators,

but neither they themselves nor other writers have made *Pinafore* and *Patience* the stepping-stones to higher things. And finally, to return to the immediate matter in hand, the "musical comedy" form which began with *In Town*, and seemed to offer such illimitable opportunities for fantasy, satire and sportive criticism of life, has gone steadily downwards instead of upwards, until it has sunk into the meaningless tomfoolery of *All Abroad*. What is the malign force that checks every fresh impetus in English theatrical life, drags down every aspiration, and, when the time is ripe for an Aristophanes, gives us instead a James T. Tanner and Owen Hall? What have we done that we should be smitten with intellectual barrenness? It was not always thus. The Elizabethan drama did not rush helter-skelter downhill from Marlowe, the Restoration comedy did not sullenly decline from Etherege. The impetus given in *Tamburlaine* culminated in *Lear*, and died away gloriously in *The Duchess of Malfy* and *The Broken Heart*. *Love in a Tub* was only the precursor of *Love for Love* and *The Beaux' Stratagem*. What is it that in these days seems to paralyse at the outset every stirring of new life? Or is it only our impatience that leads us to take momentary deflections for permanent aberrations, and blinds us to the true curve of development? That is just the question. If we could answer it, we should know whether there is really any artistic future for the English stage.

In one respect, however, the Gilbert impulse has not been entirely resultless: it has permanently raised the standard of stage versification. No one nowadays dares to come forward with the unspeakable balderdash which passed for verse during the Byron-Reece-Farnie period. I shall never forget Mr. Lionel Brough in *Blue Beard* (an amusing burlesque in its day) singing a song which ended with this lovely quatrain:

“ For it is just as poets sing,
You can't have too much of a good thing;
And they do say it is good to wed—
So now no more at present on that head.”

This is a perfectly fair specimen of the wit and metre that passed current twenty years ago, when (it must be said in extenuation) librettists had very often to fit their words to pre-existent French airs, utterly irreconcilable with English rhythms. Mr. Gilbert has changed all that. The English librettist now writes stanzas of regular and sometimes very ingenious form, which he hands to the composer for musical treatment. This is the rational order of things, and we have already quite a little group, headed by Mr. Gilbert himself and Mr. “Adrian Ross,” of clever, and sometimes brilliant, verse-writers for the stage. Mr. W. H. Risque, the poet of *All Abroad*, is not brilliant but decidedly clever. With a better book to inspire him, he would no doubt do better work; as it

is, his lyrics are gay and tripping enough, though here and there rather too music-hally in tone. Mr. F. Rosse's music seemed to me even thinner than usual in such productions, but there was a certain swing about several numbers that caught the fancy of the audience. The company was not vocally strong, though Mr. John Coates, as the sailor lover, sang with ease and effect. Miss Ada Reeve and Miss Kate Cutler played the sister heroines very pleasantly. Miss Reeve has a curious wire-thread of a voice—one can scarcely call it gold or even silver wire—but uses it with such vivacity that the audience does not trouble about its tone. Mr. Charles E. Stevens and Mr. Horace Mills, as the two idiot solicitors, prove themselves capable low-comedians; and Mr. De Lange manages to introduce one or two clever touches into the part of the champagne-manufacturer.

The most amusing figure in the old burlesque of *Blue Beard* above alluded to was the Heathen Chinee of Mr. Willie Edouin. It has often been suggested that, though the burlesque is dead beyond possibility of revival, Ah Sin might be revived in another play. Mr. Fenton Mackay has acted upon this suggestion, and made the Heathen Chinee, re-christened Qwong Hi, the central figure of a farce of that name.* The farce, unfortunately, is in itself utterly vapid, and there is very little humour or

* Avenue Theatre, July 27—August 17.

ingenuity in the situations in which Qwong Hi is involved. Nevertheless, the quaintness of Mr. Edouin's performance keeps the audience fairly amused. The "Hong Kong heiress," to whom Qwong Hi acts as nurse, is played by Miss May Edouin, a vivacious young lady, whose bent would seem to be towards the music-hall rather than the stage.

XXXVII.

"A YOUNGSTER'S ADVENTURE"—"NEW YORK
DIVORCE."

28th August.

THE interim management at the Strand Theatre may boast of having established two "records"—the record of ineptitude in comedietta and of vulgarity in farce.* The author of *A Youngster's Adventure*, Mr. John S. Clarke, is a popular comedian and, I presume, a successful manager; with these distinctions he ought to be content. He writes like a sentimental schoolboy, and a schoolboy who has not even the instinct to choose good models for imitation. The farce, entitled *New York Divorce*, is "based on the French," by an anonymous author. It seems to be a farrago of three or four French vaudevilles so jumbled up as

* August 19—September 11.

to make the story totally incomprehensible—which is, indeed, an extenuating circumstance. It belongs to the lowest order of dramatic entertainment; but the first-night audience laughed at it, and critics, I understand, have been found to praise it. The acting was, fortunately, better than the play. Mr. Wilfred Clarke showed a good deal of comic energy and conviction, Miss Marie Hudspeth was very bright, and Mr. Oswald Yorke played with ease and intelligence.

XXXVIII.

"THE SWORDSMAN'S DAUGHTER."

4th September.

WHEN *Le Maître d'Armes*, by MM. Jules Mary and Georges Grisier, was produced in Paris in October 1892, Francisque Sarcey took the authors gravely to task in the name of "Aristotle and common-sense." What Aristotle had to do in that galley (or common-sense either, for the matter of that) is not very apparent; but M. Sarcey's objection to the play is sufficiently curious to merit a little examination. He found in it an example of the modern and reprehensible tendency to present "slices of life" rather than constructed and developed dramas; and especially he reproached the authors with deliberately omitting the *scène à faire*. A young lady is seduced, he says, and,

for the sake of her child, implores her betrayer to keep his promise of marriage. He renews the promise, without the slightest intention of fulfilling it, and goes on board his yacht in order to make his escape. She discovers his purpose, and follows him on board the yacht. "What is the scene," asks M. Sarcey—and here I translate literally—"which you expect, you, the public? It is the scene between the abandoned fair one and her seducer. The author may make it in a hundred ways, but make it he must!" Instead of which, the critic proceeds, we are fobbed off with a storm-scene, a rescue, and other sensational incidents, and hear no word of what passes between the villain and his victim.

All this remains practically unaltered in *The Swordsman's Daughter*, by Messrs. Brandon Thomas and Clement Scott, produced last Saturday at the Adelphi;* so that we can give a direct answer to M. Sarcey's appeal to the public. It is not at all the answer which M. Sarcey puts in our mouths. Words cannot express our unconcern as to what passes between the heroine and the villain on board the yacht—nay, more, our gratitude for being spared that painful and threadbare scene of recrimination. We know it all beforehand; we have heard it a hundred times; and we warmly applaud the discretion which compresses all that is needful for the purposes of the

* August 31—November 30.

story into a few hurried words in the second act. The plot demands, observe, that the villain shall not relent. We know quite well that he cannot, for if he did the play would fall to pieces. Why, then, should we "expect" or demand a sordid squabble which can lead to nothing? The storm-scene may or may not be a "slice of life," but it is fifty times more interesting than the scene for which M. Sarcey yearns. It, too, leads to nothing; if it were to be casually omitted one evening no one would miss it; and on that account (among others) Aristotle would scarcely approve of *The Swordsman's Daughter*. Its plot is of the "episodic" order which he expressly condemns. But I doubt whether Aristotle would have liked the play much better if M. Sarcey had had his way, and I am sure the Adelphi audience would have liked it a great deal worse. The moral, therefore, seems to be that in this class of play—the drama, if one may call it so, of foregone character—the *scène à faire* is precisely the scene to be avoided. It is so obvious, and has been done so often before, that even the least sophisticated audience is heartily sick of it. In the present instance, indeed, I think M. Sarcey is mistaken in the application of his own principles. I doubt whether the scene he clamours for is in even the most conventional sense the *scène à faire*. But if it clearly and unmistakably fulfilled M. Sarcey's definition, we should none the less beg to be spared it.

The interest of a really dramatic scene lies in the unfolding of character, or the ingenious and unforeseen development of a situation. Now, in plays of this class there is no character to be unfolded, and it is almost impossible to hit on an ingenious and unforeseen development of situation within the narrow limits prescribed by the tastes and prejudices of a "popular" audience. Therefore, the purveyors of this form of entertainment are well-advised, it seems to me, when they concentrate their attention on spectacular or sensational episodes, and reduce to a minimum what M. Sarcy would call (justly enough) the dramatic element of the production—when, in a word, they "cut the cackle and come to the 'osses." The "well-made" melodramas have all been written, the "scenes to be done" have all been done over and over again till we know them by heart. We—and by "we" I mean the public to which such plays appeal—have but little appetite for copious re-hashes of such very cold mutton as the appeals of the penitent heroine to the recalcitrant villain. We are ready and even eager to accept the most summary indications of these familiar passages, and get on to the duels, and shipwrecks, and railway accidents, and zarebas, and laagers, and Derby Days, and polo-matches, and explosions, and conflagrations, which M. Sarcy accepts, half ironically, half naïvely, as "slices of life." Illustration, as some one pointed out the other day,

has of late become enormously popular. The demand for picture-books and picture-papers seems to increase every day; and a similar tendency, I believe, is apparent in the melodramatic theatres. People do not care how slight a setting of text is provided, so long as the "plates" are numerous and highly coloured. To this demand *The Swordsman's Daughter* conforms. The fencing-school scenes are novel and animated, the duel is extremely picturesque and convincing, and the storm is a highly effective piece of musical meteorology. Not a soul in the audience, I am absolutely certain, missed M. Sarcey's *scène à faire*. Some of us, indeed, would gladly have dispensed with one or two of the *scènes faites*—that, for instance, in which the paralytic father forces his daughter to confess her misfortune in the presence of the man she loves.

There is one genuine touch of nature in the play, quite inadvertent on the authors' part, no doubt, but none the less typical. When the excellent Vibrac believes that it is Thérèse who has found too late that men betray, he treats her with the most sympathetic humanity; when he learns that it is his own daughter who has made the false step, he behaves to her like a brute. He thus illustrates the great principle that charity, liberality, tolerance are apt to begin anywhere else than at home. For the rest, there is no gleam of originality either in the concep-

tion or in the writing of the play. The episode of the sailor's death and his wife's suicide might have been effective but for three trifling circumstances. In the first place, the authors (or adaptors) had made him a bibulous buffoon, in whose fate no one can take the slightest interest. In the second place, the despairing widow (probably translating the word *bête* too literally) apostrophises the ocean as "You beast!" and thereby turns the situation to burlesque. In the third place, the miracle which is apparently intended to prove that the Everlasting has fixed his canon 'gainst self-slaughter somehow did not come off. "L'artillerie du ciel" (as the elder Dumas translated Hamlet's "canon") was not rightly "fixed," or else missed fire. The two latter drawbacks to the success of the scene have no doubt been remedied by this time. The idiotic and offensive character of the sailor ought also to be remodelled, for even if it did not take all the interest out of this scene, it would still be no less tedious than senseless. The audience was quite as much puzzled as the Baron de Chantoisel to find any humour in the catchword "Man overboard!" The abject poverty of the comic scenes in general is the only thing that renders the success of the play at all doubtful. Popular audiences demand not only good "coloured plates," but spirited "comic cuts" as well. These, and not the *scènes à faire*, are the essential ingredients of modern melodrama.

Mr. Terriss looked noble as the grey-haired swordsman, and played the part with due dignity and emphasis. His frock-coat, with the order at the button-hole, was an incomparable masterpiece. He did not take the paralysis scenes very seriously, and in that he was well-advised. Miss Millward made a pleasant heroine, Mr. Abingdon an unmistakable villain, and Mr. Charles Fulton a manly and spirited hero. Other parts were well played by Mrs. E. H. Brooke, Miss Marriott, and Miss Vane Featherston. It was not Mr. Harry Nicholls's fault that the Baron de Chantoisel seemed a very dull dog.

XXXIX.

"ALABAMA."

11th September.

"I STILL recollect," says Carlyle of Coleridge, "his 'object' and 'subject,' terms of continual recurrence in the Kantian province; and how he sang and snuffled them into 'om-m-mject' and 'sum-m-mject,' with a kind of solemn shake or quaver, as he rolled along." Everybody, nowadays, can sing or snuffle about "object" and "subject." They are terms one tries to avoid, as belonging to the stock-in-trade of pedantry, and cheap pedantry to boot. Yet there are times when it becomes the first duty of criticism

to distinguish between the "om-m-mject" and the "sum-m-mject," as Coleridge would have said—to state the tangible and demonstrable facts about a work of art, before recording the personal sensations and judgments to which it gives rise. Criticism, to be sure, cannot get very far before the "sum-m-mject" intrudes itself; but, for practical purposes, any quality or characteristic which is either self-evident or capable of demonstration to all persons of normal perceptivity, may be classed as inherent in the object. When I say, for example, that Mr. Arthur Roberts is jocose, I record an objective fact; if I add that he is amusing, I commit myself to a subjective criticism.

Let me try, then, to look at *Alabama** objectively, before passing on to inquire why it delighted me and the great majority of the Garrick audience, while it bored a minority, both in the gallery and the stalls. Its chief characteristics are three: simplicity, amiability, reticence. Nothing could be simpler than its action, its characters, its emotions. It is a little nosegay, so to speak, of homely love-stories—a network of what Miss Wilkins would call "humble romances." Sentimental it is, sentimental and unashamed; but the sentiment finds sober, un-rhetorical, often even wordless expression, and humour always treads close upon its heels, or rather goes hand-in-hand with it. As for character-study,

* September 2—October 12.

if we confine that term to the ransacking of dark tortuosities of the soul, the analysis of egoisms and vanities, the diagnosis of disease, why, then there is no character-study in the piece, any more than in *The Vicar of Wakefield* or *Pickwick*. So far as we can judge from this single play, Mr. Augustus Thomas seems to have an eye for superficial quaintnesses of character, rather than for "psycho-physiological enigmas." He is a delineator, not an analyst. To compare him with any of the great creators of fiction or the drama—with Tolstoi or Ibsen, to name only living examples—would be like comparing Randolph Caldecott with Velasquez. But there is a time for Caldecott, and a time for Velasquez; nay more, there are phases of character which belong to the sympathetic humorist, rather than to the soul-searcher or the seer. Simple characters—relatively simple, that is to say—have a real existence, no less than the complex characters begotten by civilisation and sophistication. They exist, indeed, in immensely greater numbers; and the artist has a perfect right to take us into primitive regions, geographical or merely social, where no one has dreamt of disintegrating or reconstructing the old ideals, and where the conceptions, or prejudices if you will, of manhood, womanhood, love, honour, duty, patriotism, religion, property, marriage, have been handed down unaltered from time immemorial. It is into such a

"bayou" or backwater of American life that Mr. Thomas asks us to follow him. He asks us, furthermore, to take a sympathetic interest in such legendary phenomena as paternal and filial affection, strong after years of estrangement, the old love of a man for a woman, the young love of a youth for a maid, and the simple, stupid chivalry which will, as a mere matter of course, face death for the honour of a woman who denies it all reward. The author's observation, it is clear, has a distinct bias towards the amiable. Everybody is delightful except the villain, and he, from first to last, has "no show." But in this Mr. Thomas is simply carrying out one of the clearest precepts of Aristotle. (I have been reading Professor Butcher's excellent edition of the *Poetics*, so that, for the moment, Aristotle and I are on the most cordial terms.) "In respect of character," he remarks (*Poetics*, cap. xv. 1), "there are four things to be observed. First, and most important, it must be good. . . . This rule applies to persons of every class. *Even a woman may be good*, and also a slave; though the woman may be said to be an inferior being, and the slave is absolutely bad." Inferior or not, Mr. Thomas's women are all good, and so is his slave; though the fact is perhaps rather an index to the author's temperament than a proof of his reverent familiarity with Aristotle. Seriously, he averts his gaze from the night side of life, and paints in bright,

and tender, and transparent washes. The form of drama to which his work most nearly approximates is our own cup-and-saucer comedy. But his mechanism is even simpler than that of Robertson and Albery, and his style is much more sober. He does not stray into caricature, into rhetoric, or into artificial wit. He does not, like Albery, or Mr. Pinero in his earlier plays, seize upon a metaphor, and work it up into a sort of fugue of fantasy. He keeps well within the limits of possible conversation; yet, by nicely choosing his words, he achieves a certain distinction of style. I wish *Alabama* were printed. There are passages in it that I would gladly quote; for quotation is, after all, the best way of presenting the "om-m-mject"

A certain subjectivity, I fear, has crept into the foregoing paragraph; but I don't think even the critics who pooh-poohed the play will, on the whole, object to my description of it. "We admit all this," they will say; "*Alabama* may be as simple, amiable, and reticent as you please; but the fact remains that its simplicity seemed to us childish, its amiability mawkish, and its reticence ineffective. In a word, it bored us." So far was it from boring me, that I would willingly have gone the next evening and seen it all over again. Here, then, we face the subjective problem: Whence arises this diametrical difference of impression?

It would be a cheap, and not over-polite, solution of

the difficulty to hint that the despisers of the play are insensitive to refinement of theatrical workmanship, or else such stern and stony realists that they cannot even permit themselves the momentary relaxation of a little sentimental idealism, however delicate and graceful. I prefer to consider whether there is any idiosyncrasy in myself, which renders me more than ordinarily accessible, or supersensitive as it were, to the appeal of *Alabama*. And here the question of local colour at once presents itself. The play proclaims its localism in its very title; it is as clearly a picture of local manners as *L'Arlésienne* or *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Now these local manners have for me, I confess, a quite peculiar interest and charm; so that what may detract from the enjoyment of some people notably enhances mine. These English-speaking foreigners, so unlike us in manners and habits of thought, and yet so instantly and intimately comprehensible, are an unfailing delight to me. I will even go further, and say that in some obscure, irrational way they minister to my vanity. I am proud of America; of its history and its literature; of its diversities of climate, nature, character, manners, speech. They are a precious part of my birthright. Like Whitman, "I loaf and invite my soul" through all these strange and foreign regions, where yet my language and my race-traditions make me so curiously at home. "A new language," says some one, "is a

new sense;" but this English language of ours enables us to multiply our senses—that is, to envisage the world in new ways—without the labour of acquiring new word-stores or constructive forms. Every province of the Anglo-Saxon world (not in America alone) is now finding expression, and often fine and original expression, in literature. This decentralisation of fiction, this return to the soil, has been one of the chief literary movements of the past twenty years, and has produced more than one masterpiece. If I were asked to name an English book of that period which seemed clearly destined to immortality, I believe I should pitch upon that boy-Odyssey of the Mississippi, Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. We "sin our mercies" or waste our privileges if we do not go out to welcome these fresh and genial self-interpretations of our alien compatriots. For me, at any rate, it is a delight, not an effort, to live in imagination under the infinite variety of conditions to which the language of Chaucer and Kipling gives me free and familiar access. The American War, too, out of which the action of *Alabama* springs, seems to me the one war of recent history in which it is possible to take a human, as opposed to a merely spectacular, interest. It possessed genuine elements of heroism. It was a war of freemen, not of automata: of ideals, not of personal ambitions or race-hatreds. For all these reasons, then—as a picture of Greater-

British life and character, and an extension to the stage of a large and vital literary movement—*Alabama* came straight home to my sympathies. The foreignness of scene, customs, and dialect, which annoyed some critics, added appreciably to my enjoyment of Mr. Thomas's humour, sentiment, and scenic skill. In such a matter of personal idiosyncrasy, it would be ridiculous to assert the "rightness" or "wrongness" of either way of feeling. But my way of feeling—which seemed to be shared by the great majority of the audience—has at least the advantage of widening the range of my pleasures.

It remains to be said that the acting, though good on the whole, was not altogether judicious or fortunate. In a play which contains a good deal of dialect, the greatest care should be taken to get every syllable over the footlights; and in a play of character rather than incident, the performance should never be suffered to drag. On the first night of *Alabama*, several of the actors were so much taken up with reproducing the Southern drawl that they frequently became inaudible, while Miss Marion Terry's nervousness made her very uncertain of her words, and of course communicated itself, in some degree, to her comrades. By this time, no doubt, the piece is played with greater crispness and decision. Mr. Fernandez and Mr. Willard were admirable as the long-estranged father and son. The recognition-

scene at the close, most ingeniously brought about, is singularly pathetic—so much so that the subordinate actors on the stage, not personally concerned in the situation, were visibly moved by it. Mr. John Mason was delightful as the chivalrous Colonel Moberley, and Mr. F. H. Tyler, though a little too slow, was good as Squire Tucker. Mr. W. T. Lovell and Miss Agnes Miller made a pleasant pair of lovers, and the minor parts were well filled. Whatever the fate of the play, Mr. Willard has shown true artistic instinct in producing it, and deserves the thanks of all who care for delicacy and refinement in theatrical art.

XL.

"BOGEY"—"THE CHILI WIDOW."

18th September.

MR. H. V. ESMOND's three-act play, *Bogey*,* professes to give "some account of the curious behaviour of Disembodied Bates." What it really does is to allege a crazy incoherence in the order of things, abhorrent to the reason, and neither pleasant nor profitable to the imagination. We may not have the right to ask of a work of art, "What does it prove?" but a miracle must certainly abide this challenge. A

* St. James's, September 10—September 21.

meaningless miracle is a sort of insanity in the universal mind, which the particular mind shrinks from conceiving. It is true that, as the family ghost explained to Mr. Andrew Lang, the spiritual world seems generally to be afflicted with aphasia. The sufferer from this disease says that his tea is blue when he means that it is sweet, and when he wants an umbrella is as likely as not to ask for a bathing-machine. Thus, when Mr. Lang's ghostly visitant wished to convey to his living descendants that the drainage of Castle Perilous was out of order, the nearest he could get to that statement was to drive round and round the castle in the form of a hearse and six. This is certainly not a luminous method of expression; but the proceedings of the umquhile Master of Perilous were rational and coherent in comparison with the "behaviour of Disembodied Bates." A family ghost has, so to speak, an insurable interest in the welfare of his descendants, and the hearse and six, if not absolutely perspicuous, was at least a picturesque adumbration of typhoid and diphtheria. The deceased Bates, on the other hand, forger and dipsomaniac, had nothing whatever to do with Archibald Buttanshaw, into whom his spirit entered with disastrous results. It does not appear that Bates was an ancestor of Buttanshaw's, else the play might pass for an allegory of atavism. It does not appear that Bates, while in the flesh, was at

enmity with Buttanshaw or any of his ancestors. A vendetta prolonged beyond the grave is an accepted motive in ghost-psychology, and, for the sake of the thrill, we do not mind pretending to believe in it; but here there is no hint of anything of the kind. Finally, it is through no flaw in Mr. Buttanshaw's own character that the spirit of Bates obtains such easy entrance into his organism. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* symbolised—not for the first time in literature—that moral dualism which exists, perhaps, in all of us, and is very marked in some. Hyde was, from the first, implicit in Jekyll; all the potion did was to turn outward the seamy side of his soul. But in Mr. Esmond's play there is no mention of any secret affinity, any long-dissembled bias, which might be supposed to render Buttanshaw peculiarly susceptible to the influence of a demon on the prowl. Uncle Archie is the best of men. For aught that we can see, his youth has been as virtuous as his age is benignant. Mr. Esmond, then, has not taken any of the three courses open to him: the biological, the moral, or the simply sensational. He has not made the "possession" of his hero a recrudescence of ancestral vices, nor an outbreak of personal vices once indulged and long festering in repression; nor has he simply extended to the spirit world the passions and rancours of the flesh, making Disembodied Bates persecute his victim from

motives which arose (in relation to Buttanshaw himself or his forbears) while Bates was still embodied. He has not even, as in the common ghost-story, made the spirit resent an intrusion into the message or tenement of which he, the said spirit, believed himself to be lawfully seised and possessed. In none of these forms has he made the slightest attempt to give meaning and consistency to his miracle; he has left it utterly motiveless and fortuitous. "But why," he may perhaps ask, "should I be expected to rationalise the irrational, to naturalise the preternatural? If you swallow the camel of spiritual 'possession,' why strain at the gnat of the particular form it happens to assume?" Pardon! we do not "swallow the camel." We are quite prepared to do so if you hold out adequate temptation in the shape of beauty, terror, intellectual ingenuity, moral or spiritual fitness and relevancy; but as it is, we never for a moment believe in your fable because you do not make us wish to believe in it. The artist is greatly mistaken who imagines that by plunging into the supernatural he can simply shake off all logical and psychological trammels, and fantasticate at random. The human mind cannot picture to itself a world devoid of law and order. You are at liberty, indeed, to establish what laws or conventions you please in the preternatural sphere, but, once established, they must not be arbitrarily overridden. And, especially in what

relates to the mind, your laws must not diverge too widely from those of the real world, or we shall presently lose interest in their operation. Your spirits may put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes, but they must love and hate, think and feel, pretty much as we ourselves do, or they will merely bewilder and irritate us. The "behaviour of Disembodied Bates" is like that of a man who should suddenly raise his walking-stick and inflict a severe thrashing on an inoffensive passer-by whom he had never seen before. When such cases occur we do not write plays about them, but put the aggressor in a strait-waistcoat. And if the "curious behaviour" of a live lunatic does not interest us in the theatre, why expect us to be thrilled by the proceedings of a dead one?

If Mr. Esmond had intended his play as a satire upon "spiritualism," one could have seen the meaning of it, though not his reason for devoting three acts to such a purpose. The behaviour of Disembodied Bates is not a whit more pointless and futile than the majority of the actions and "manifestations" of the mighty dead, according to the believers in this dismal doctrine. But satire is far from Mr. Esmond's intention. If spirits exist, indeed, and behave as the spiritualists allege, it is quite useless to satirise them; we can only mourn our lot in being born into so foolish a universe. Satire must be levelled at Mr.

Sludge, not at his "controls"; whereas Mr. Esmond treats Sludge (under the *alias* of Noah Emens) with all possible respect. The fact seems to be that Mr. Esmond enjoys his fantasy, and expects us to enjoy it, simply for its own sake. The mere imagination of these incidents, apart from all questions of constructive ingenuity or philosophical significance, gives him pleasure in and for itself. The first-night audience seemed to share that pleasure, and I hope other audiences may be as easily satisfied; for, after all, the play is quite harmless, and there is a good deal of really clever writing in it, reminding one now of Dickens and again of Mr. Pinero. But Mr. Esmond may rest assured that no work of permanent value can be produced without a much more strenuous effort of invention than he has devoted to *Bogey*. His fantasy is altogether too arbitrary and facile. The spirit of Bates enters into Buttanshaw for no reason and departs out of him for no reason. If the drama even consisted of a struggle between the evil principle embodied (or disembodied) in Bates and the good principle embodied in Fairy Buttanshaw, one could recognise a sort of rudimentary ethical significance and dramatic coherence in it. As it is, there is no sign of any such struggle. The spirit, indeed, retreats from the presence of the little girl, and returns in her absence; but it does not appear that she has anything to do with finally exorcising it.

The whole thing is unconditioned and irrelevant, a tangle, not a fabric. "It is not so, nor 'twas not so; but, indeed, God forbid it should be so."

Mr. Esmond's rather thin and sharp-edged voice—an excellent voice for a wide range of character-parts—is scarcely suited to the dual personage of Bates-Buttanshaw. It has not enough flexibility and variety. His performance of Buttanshaw was clever and amiable, but for the thrill of horror (if any) produced by his Bates, he was mainly indebted to a green limelight. Miss Eva Moore was charming as Fairy Buttanshaw, and Mr. F. Everill was good as the stony man of business who at ten o'clock every evening becomes a genial man of feeling. Miss Pattie Bell played the middle-aged heroine very pleasantly, and Mr. Elliot, Mr. Philip Cunningham, and Miss Ethel Matthews did all that could reasonably be expected with a trio of comic lovers whose proceedings were undeniably ludicrous, but scarcely amusing.

M. Sarcey's favourite theory that even in the wildest extravagance of farce we demand a certain germ of truth, a "grain of observation," as he loves to call it, is flatly contradicted, so far as England is concerned, by the success of *The Chili Widow* at the Royalty.* In Bisson and Carré's *Monsieur le Directeur* there may have been this grain of observa-

* September 7—still running.

tion; but in the Anglicised version it has utterly and inevitably vanished. Every character and incident is obtrusively un-English. We have to replace the play in France before we can find its action conceivable, even on the plane of farce. It is possible that preference in Downing Street does not always go strictly by merit, and its dispensers are perhaps not steeled at all points against the blandishments of lovely woman; but these blandishments are certainly not brought to bear after the fashion here represented. And all other details are equally devoid of verisimilitude, whether literal or typical. The farce amuses us, not because we recognise it as representing or interpreting anything under the sun, but simply, like a thousand other French farces, because of the inherent ludicrousness of the situations. This is indeed, the most universally popular of all forms of humour. The act of comparison and recognition involves more or less intellectual effort, and the multitude naturally prefers laughter without labour—absurdities which take the muscles, as it were, by storm, and compel a laugh almost as mechanically as a pinch of snuff compels a sneeze. At the same time, those who prefer a little exercise of the intellect in their amusements may, if they please, study and admire the ingenuity with which MM. Bisson and Carré have manipulated their theme, so as to extract from it all its comic possibilities, and

keep the fun unflaggingly alive. What I, for my part, cannot admire is the way in which the English adapters have either retained from the original, or invented on their own account, numerous speeches whose sole attraction lies in their smack of impropriety. In the scene between the mother-in-law and the cook, for example, there are one or two expressions which might come naturally enough to a French servant, but would be quite impossible to an English girl of the same class. Again, when the mother-in-law comes to urge her son-in-law's claims upon the head of his department, there is legitimate comedy in her sense of the risk she is running in venturing into the den of this notorious Don Juan. Instead of delicately indicating her qualms and tremors, the authors, or adapters, are content to expound the comedy of the situation in one crude aside, and then make no more of it. "Here is the man," they make her say, "who can grant me everything, but who may ask a great deal in return." This is dotting the "i" with a vengeance, and is as undramatic as it is unpleasing. Finally, the classic situation in which A. urges B. to make love to a lady whom B. believes to be Mrs. A., is developed and elaborated to the point of nauseousness. The farce would be every bit as funny if these things were touched with a discreeter hand. It is brightly and cleverly acted all round. Mr. Bouchier's Sir Reginald is by far the best thing

he has done. Miss Violet and Miss Irene Vanbrugh, appropriately cast as two sisters, play with no less intelligence than charm; and Mr. Blakeley, Mr. Welton Dale, Mr. Mark Kinghorne, Miss Sophie Larkin, and Miss Kate Phillips are all excellent.

XLI.

"ROMEO AND JULIET."

25th September.

SHAKESPEARE'S tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet** was mounted, costumed, recited, and applauded at the Lyceum on Saturday evening; acted and enjoyed it was not. Many people, no doubt, will contradict this from their own experience, saying, "*I* enjoyed it—And I!—And I!" They must allow me, in that case, to assure them that they do not begin to realise the sort of pleasure which *Romeo and Juliet* can, and ought to, give them. No doubt they enjoyed the pretty stage pictures, and the gallant bearing of Mr. Forbes Robertson, and the graceful, gazelle-eyed helplessness of Mrs. Patrick Campbell; while here and there, perhaps, a familiar line of Shakespeare fell pleasantly on their ear. Their sum of agreeable sensations may have been considerable; but it certainly did not include the thrill of pity and terror, the quickening of the pulses, the exaltation, the delight which

* September 21—December 21.

belong to a true revival of this loveliest lyric and swiftest, vividest drama in our language or in any other. For my part, I have to wipe the performance from my memory, to re-think the play, to re-act it in imagination, before I can recover any intimate sense of its poetry, passion, and pathos. If you have never realised these qualities, and do not look or care for them, you escape disappointment, and may take a good deal of pleasure in the pretty spectacle, pretty speeches, and pretty people presented to you; but you have not seen, you have not *felt*, the great love-tragedy of the world.

The reader may think that I am simply re-wording Lamb's famous paradox, or rather blaming Mr. Forbes Robertson and his comrades, unjustly and unreasonably, for the fact that the representation of one of Shakespeare's masterpieces must necessarily, in some respects, fall short of the imagination of it. But my ground of argument is quite different from Lamb's. His contention was that the best conceivable performance, under the physical conditions of the stage, inevitably materialises and vulgarises the poet's conception. "The love-dialogues of *Romeo and Juliet*," he wrote, "those silver-sweet sounds of lovers' tongues by night . . . how are they sullied and turned from their very nature by being exposed to a large assembly!" He tacitly assumes, you see, that the best that art can do for them is done, and declares that

even then they are profaned by stage-presentation. The Lyceum performance relieves us of all necessity for discussing this position, since at no point does it do the best that art can and ought to do. When we have a reasonably perfect performance, we can argue with Lamb at our leisure; in the meantime, we have no material before us for testing his theory. When no character is represented with anything like distinguished excellence, and when two of the most important—Juliet and Mercutio—are glaringly misrepresented, we do not get within measurable distance of Lamb's point of view.

Mr. Forbes Robertson and Mrs. Patrick Campbell, in the parts of Romeo and Juliet, suffer from opposite defects: the one has skill without temperament, the other temperament without skill. Mr. Robertson can act Romeo, but cannot look or feel the part; Mrs. Campbell could *be* Juliet if only she knew how to act it. Handsome and picturesque Mr. Forbes Robertson must always look when his costume gives him the opportunity. In this part he has the air of a figure from Sir Frederick Leighton's illustrations to *Romola*. But even if he could put on youth with his berretta, he could not put off the keen and ascetic facial contours which are so foreign to the very idea of Romeo. He is essentially a creature of reflection. He can but faintly suggest that heyday of the blood, that sudden springtide of world-trans-

figuring sense, that unreflecting absorption in the instinct of the moment, which are the very essence of Romeo's being. Even his voice, in itself his most precious gift, is not the fresh young voice of Romeo. He played throughout with intelligence and discretion; but the latter quality, at any rate, is precisely the one with which Romeo could, at a pinch, dispense. There were one or two trifling matters of emphasis and phrasing on which I was inclined to differ from him. For example, in the line, "And what love can do that dares love attempt," I should certainly follow the metre and emphasise the "can." The sense is, surely, "Love will shrink from nothing that is physically possible. Your kinsman's swords make it dangerous, but not physically impossible, for me to be here—so here I am!" Again, Mr. Robertson spoke the words, "O, mischief! thou art swift To enter in the thoughts of desperate men," as though they were a general reflection *preceding* the recollection of the Apothecary; whereas they surely indicate that the plan for procuring the poison has instantaneously flashed into his mind. Mr. Robertson seems to understand by them, "I am sure I shall easily hit upon means;" to my thinking they rather imply, "Ha! I already see my way clearly." These are trifling matters, and no doubt Mr. Robertson could defend his readings. It is neither thought nor understanding that is lacking in his performance, but that lyric

rapture, that throb and flush of youth, which no intensity of thought can compass. Significantly enough, the one moment of the whole evening when the poetry really gripped me was that in which the world-weary Romeo bids Juliet his last farewell. Mr. Robertson's voice had just the right sombreness for those incomparably beautiful verses, and the passage moved me so that I had no heart to quarrel with a stage-arrangement which falsified the words, "Thus with a kiss I die." My conservative instinct rebelled at first against the reversal of the established scene-plot, the front of the stage being made the interior of the vault, and the back, seen through an open grating, the exterior. The method of sepulture, indeed, is quite inconceivable; but that disadvantage apart, I am bound to admit that the new arrangement proved highly effective.

People said in the lobbies that Mrs. Patrick Campbell looked too old for Juliet; but there I emphatically dissent. True, she looked more than fourteen, but it would have shocked all our instincts if she had not. Shakespeare made Juliet fourteen because he wrote the part for a boy who, no doubt, could scarcely look older; and the public of his day was not shocked, because the marriageable age was then, by custom, placed lower than it is with us. It would be the veriest pedantry to ignore this alteration in manners. Were I in Mr. Forbes Robertson's place, I should

frankly substitute "eighteen" for "fourteen" in the text, nothing doubting of Shakespeare's forgiveness. In appearance, Mrs. Campbell seemed to me the ideal Juliet—beautiful, with a Southern type of beauty, yet slim, girlish, and lissome in her movements. She played the opening scenes prettily enough; there is no great effect to be made or marred in them. In the balcony-scene she spoke her lines correctly, and, to use an old-fashioned term, elegantly, with that curious half-foreign nicety of articulation which is at once a merit and a defect in her delivery. She added nothing to the beauty of the lines, no new delicacy of phrasing or subtlety of intonation; but her only positive fault was a certain monotony. She was reciting a part, but reciting it with feeling and charm; and, as she made a delightful picture, we had every reason to be satisfied. Up to this point, recitation, though not all that is possible, is all that is essential to Juliet. A schoolgirl, with a little practice in elocution, could get through the ballroom and balcony scenes with credit. Acting, as distinguished from recitation, sets in with the scene of cajolery between Juliet and the Nurse; and here Mrs. Campbell at once fell short. She showed no intensity and no variety in her expression of eagerness, expectation, disappointment, anger, affection, rapture, but played all on one level of prettiness. This scene of two pages is one of the most skilful and *actable* ever written by playwright

for actress; I do not remember ever to have seen it pass, as it did on Saturday night, without the faintest applause. The audience, though all intent on appreciation, simply thought it one of Shakespeare's dull moments. Mrs. Campbell, by the way, takes commendable pains to speak the verse correctly, so it may be worth while to point out that in the line "From nine till twelve Is three long hours, yet he is not come," the word "hours" should be treated as a dissyllable ("how-ers"). Like "fire," it was evidently so pronounced in Shakespeare's time. I confess with regret that I did not hear Mrs. Campbell's delivery of "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds," placed in the Lyceum arrangement at the beginning of the third act.* In the scene with the Nurse which follows, she was monotonous and flat. For instance, a marked transition of tone is very clearly indicated between the line "All this is comfort; wherefore weep I then?" and the following passage: "Some word there was, worser than Tybalt's death, That murder'd me," etc. Mrs. Campbell attempts no change of tone, marks no transition of thought. It is all empty rhetoric to her; she does not feel, or try to make us feel, that Juliet is really searching in the background of her mind for the word of ill-omen which she knows to be lurking there,

* In the Lyceum acting edition, a footnote states that this scene is "sometimes omitted," and I am informed that Mrs. Campbell dropped it very early in the run.

though in her bewilderment she has scarcely grasped its purport. This scene, again, fell quite dead and passed with no sign of applause. In the parting from Romeo, Mrs. Campbell displayed a childlike prettiness, without lyrical impulse or ground-swell of passion. The clinging kiss in which she lets Romeo almost draw her after him through the window was by far the best thing in the scene. Where Mrs. Campbell was really excellent was in the little outburst of temper after her mother has proposed the marriage with Paris ("Now by St. Peter's Church, and Peter too," etc.). Petulance is the emotion of all others which comes best within her range—a fact which is no doubt partly the cause and partly the effect of her success in Mrs. Tanqueray. It accounts, too, for the way in which she scolds the Friar in the speech, "Oh! bid me leap, rather than marry Paris, From off the battlements of yonder tower;" but this is an error into which many actresses have fallen. Much more surprising is the absolute lack of expression with which she listens to the Friar's speech about the potion. In the course of these thirty-two lines, Juliet must run the whole gamut of emotion, from curiosity to wonder, terror, rapture, and resolve; Mrs. Campbell does not move a muscle to indicate any one of them. With the same apathy she returns to her father's house, flatly contradicting the Nurse's speech, "See where she comes from shrift with merry look." As

for the potion-scene, it simply does not exist in Mrs. Campbell's performance. Words cannot describe its flat, monotonous insufficiency. At two points it was absolutely comic: where, at the thought that the Friar may have "subtly ministered" a poison to her, she uncorks the phial and smells it to reassure herself—a little touch of exquisitely misplaced realism—and then where she stares over the footlights to descry the ghost of Tybalt somewhere in the dress-circle. Finally, in her death-scene, she seems to have lost all interest in the little adventure in which she has been engaged. Her stoicism is worthy of Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia. When the Friar points to Romeo's dead body, she expresses neither surprise nor emotion, but takes it quite as a matter of course. She speaks the prescribed words and goes through the appropriate motions because she feels that it is expected of her; but she has, apparently, no personal concern in the matter. The whole passage is absolutely tame and unrealised.

"But both the potion-scene and the death-scene were loudly applauded and eminently successful!" Yes; that is why I have spoken my mind about them so frankly. The explanation is simple enough. The audience, even the picked first-night audience, has no means of knowing what are the stage-possibilities of *Romeo and Juliet*. Many of them have never seen the play before; most have seen it only once or twice, many years ago; none but a few experts have closely

studied its theatrical qualities. On the other hand, every one is eager to see a beautiful and very popular actress in a character of traditional renown, and every one is (quite literally) eager to applaud her. Half the pleasure of the occasion lies in the act of applauding, and the playgoer is not easily to be balked of that enjoyment. The earlier scenes genuinely please him, and he applauds freely. The two great scenes with the Nurse produce in him no emotion, and he does not guess what effects really lurk in them. It never occurs to him that any applause is called for, and he remains silent. But the potion-scene is famous, and there is an obvious effort after effect. Here is undoubtedly an occasion for applause, and he rises to the occasion. Not to do so would be not only hard-hearted, but an act of positive self-denial. The scene affects him very mildly, but he has no criterion of how it ought to affect him; he is very good-natured, and the actress very charming. Still more evidently are plaudits demanded at the end of the play, and he is not going to be such a churl as to withhold them. So "enthusiasm is the order of the evening," the manager congratulates himself and the world at large, and the critics record with reverence the "verdict" of the first-night audience.* Why, then, should I play

* It has been said, and reiterated, that in these remarks I perform an "exploit in self-contradiction." I reprint them exactly as they originally appeared, and leave the reader to judge.

spoil-sport at the feast? Simply because if Mrs. Campbell's Juliet passes muster as a good, not to say a great, performance, there is an end of an art that I am old-fashioned enough to love—the art of Shakespearian acting. Its tradition will be lost more hopelessly than ever, and no one will believe that there are really great and vivid and poignant emotions to be got out of Shakespeare on the stage. I have very little doubt that Mrs. Campbell has other than the merely physical qualifications for the character, and might be a fine Juliet if she would be at the pains of mastering this noblest branch of her art. As it is, she does not even suspect its possibilities. She has somewhere said, if I am not mistaken, that she has never seen another Juliet and knows nothing of the traditions of the part. The more's the pity! It would need a genius comparable with Shakespeare's own to discern unaided all the delicate lights and shades of his conception, and to recognise (to say nothing of grappling with and solving) all the technical problems which he presents to his interpreter. Let it not be said that I am clamouring for a stagey, conventional Juliet. I do not erect tradition into a law, but simply assert its uses as a guide. If it does no more, it concentrates attention upon details, and reveals the existence of difficulties and opportunities which Mrs. Campbell passes gaily by, in total unconsciousness of their existence. If she will consent to regard Satur-

day's performance as a very slight first sketch for a portrait to be studiously retouched and elaborated, she may one day be the Juliet she looks—and I can wish her nothing better.

XLII.

"ROMEO AND JULIET" AGAIN—"CHEER, BOYS,
CHEER"—"IN A LOCKET."

2nd October.

My last week's article on *Romeo and Juliet*, after exceeding all permissible limits, broke short off without giving any account of the minor characters. I seize this excuse for returning to a subject which is not only the topic of the moment, but one of far more than momentary significance. My article was written before I had seen other criticisms, and without any foresight of the extraordinary divergence of opinion to which Mrs. Patrick Campbell's Juliet has given rise. It was easy enough to foresee that some critics would be readier than others to accept her beauty and charm as compensations for the evident lack of power, and apparent lack of understanding and feeling, with which she treated the intenser passages of the play. But it did not for a moment cross my mind that any one who had ever seen a great Shakespearian performance, or a great per-

formance of any sort, would call this a really adequate and competent, much less a poetic and perfect, Juliet. What was my astonishment to find that the majority of critics went into unmeasured and evidently heartfelt raptures* over an impersonation in which, after the balcony-scene, I had been unable to discover a single luminous trait or thrilling moment! We have here no ordinary difference of opinion over which one can only shrug one's shoulders, and say, "There's no accounting for tastes!" The direct imitation involved in the modern prose-drama in great measure eludes analysis. It is generally impossible to say, "This is rightly, that wrongly, done," and give our reasons. We can but record our impressions, and where other people's impressions differ, argument is futile. It is like discussing colours with the colour-blind, only that here we have no means of

* I am given to understand that this is not true of the "majority" of critics. No doubt I jumped too hastily at a conclusion from the fact that all the papers which I chanced to see, without a single exception, were unmeasured in their praises. Mr. Walkley, usually so cool and sceptical, became, for the nonce, ecstatic. A leading article in the *Daily Chronicle* proclaimed that "the most beautiful of all love poems, the most pathetic of all tragedies, was presented by interpreters able to rise to the high level of their theme," and described Mrs. Campbell as "a Juliet to satisfy the eye, the mind, and the heart." The *Pall Mall Gazette* said: "To do justice to the new *Romeo and Juliet* one would have to go over the performance step by step, with a steady crescendo of praise. . . . Never was it given to us to watch a performance as

proving on which side the colour-blindness lies. But when we come to Shakespearian drama the case is different. We have not only traditional standards, but the clearest internal evidence as to the order of effects at which Shakespeare aimed ; and when these effects are not attained, are not even attempted, we have a right to say not only "This performer impresses us thus and thus," but "This performer does not know the rudiments of the complex and difficult art he or she is essaying." Remember that by "art" I do not here mean acting in general, but the special art of poetic, rhetorical, Shakespearian acting. The question, then, which Mrs. Campbell's Juliet has, as it were, brought to a head, is whether this art is to survive or to become extinct. Many influences have recently been making for its extinction. The system of long runs, in particular, minimises our opportunities of

matchless in execution, so big in conception, and so perfectly tuned, as that of Mrs. Patrick Campbell and Mr. Forbes Robertson. . . . Personal, beautifully chiselled, free from the fetters of tradition, a work of art indeed, is the Juliet of Mrs. Patrick Campbell." "T. P.," in the *Sun*, wrote: "There was splendid intensity—complete absorption in the part—and a conception of the character that was thoroughly consistent from the first moment to the last. And the beautiful, rich, and skilfully-modulated voice never failed to produce the true note. Whatever differences there may be about details, Mrs. Patrick Campbell's Juliet will remain one of the historic representations of the part." These four critics are not, indeed, "the majority"; but I accepted them, rightly or wrongly, as representing the main body.

seeing Shakespeare on the stage, and has thus led both critics and public to lose hold of all reasonable standards. During the great period of Shakespearian acting—say from Garrick to Macready, from 1750 to 1850—no season passed in which a score or so of Shakespeare's plays were not performed at Drury Lane and Covent Garden; nowadays we see one, two, or at most three revivals in a year. The result is that we literally forget our Shakespeare. Every audience of those days contained a fair sprinkling of connoisseurs—playgoers who knew the plays by heart, were critical of readings and “business,” and hungered for the particular sensations produced by great and imaginative acting in the masterpieces of poetic drama. To-day, we have forgotten such sensations and the means of producing them. Give us pretty costumes, a soft Italian atmosphere (the work of the scene-painter and the limelight-man), and a charming actress reciting the words of her part like a school-girl, and we go away enraptured, under the impression that we have seen *Romeo and Juliet*! May I be permitted to quote some words of my own, dated January 2nd, 1894, which are curiously prophetic of the present situation? They occur in a Dedicatory Epistle* addressed to an old friend and comrade in criticism:—“We,” I said, “belong to the Old School, the school for which rhetoric was rhetoric and verse

* Prefixed to *The Theatrical World* of 1893.

was verse. In these days, the critic thinks his duty amply fulfilled when he has given a picturesque account of the general impression produced by this or that sumptuous revival, without condescending upon a single detail of any sort."

The case of Mr. Coghlan illustrates my point even more clearly than that of Mrs. Campbell. Mr. Coghlan's Mercutio was much applauded on the first night, and has been warmly praised by many critics. Now if ever actor was obviously disqualified by illness, nervousness, or both, from doing himself and his character justice, that actor was Mr. Coghlan on the evening of September 21st. He struggled bravely but painfully against indisposition. He was melancholy, languid, indistinct, torturingly slow—everything that the gay and gallant Mercutio ought not to be. Again and again he so mumbled his words behind the overhanging peak of his cap that, although I am tolerably familiar with the text, I could not make out what he was saying. Like the Scotch editor, "he jocked wi' deeficulty." It took him an interminable time to articulate such a phrase as "Oh flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified!" For my part, I sat on thorns, fearing at every moment that he would utterly break down. Yet the audience and many of the critics, innocent of all idea as to how Mercutio ought to be played, saw an actor of established reputation going through a prominent part at the

Lyceum Theatre, and felt it blasphemy to imagine that he could be anything else than excellent. Who, again, discovered, what should be patent to any one who has merely read the text, that Mr. George Warde was quite misplaced in the part of Capulet? Mr. Warde, a sound elocutionary performer, would have been excellent as the Prince of Verona. He was slow, bland, and dignified—miles away from the testy, choleric, headstrong Capulet. Miss Dolores Drummond was a correct and passable, but quite colourless, Nurse; Mr. Frank Gillmore a bright and effective Benvolio; Mr. Ian Robertson a picturesque Apothecary; and Mr. W. Dennis a fiery Tybalt with the fire put out. As I left the theatre on the first night I met an old playgoer, not a journalist, and asked him what he thought of the revival. "Well," he said with much deliberation, "I thought Nutcombe Gould was a capital Friar Lawrence"—and he said no more. That was precisely my own opinion.

No one knows better or detests more heartily than I the vices and absurdities, the mouthing, ranting, and intolerable conventionalism, of bad actors of the old school. But because a method is liable to abuse, do not let us abandon all method whatsoever. It is the central problem of the actor's art, as Shakespeare himself well knew, to preserve a temperance in the whirlwind of passion, and to reconcile vehemence with grace. If we dislike the lyric fervour, the variety

and intensity of expression, with which Shakespeare unmistakably intended his lines to be spoken, his scenes to be acted, why then let us leave Shakespeare alone, and apply our exquisite new art to material designed and adapted for it. But this is not the case; we do not dislike these things; we have only forgotten all about them. We are like people who, hearing *Tristan und Isolde* neatly touched on the pianoforte, should go away and declare this infinitely preferable to the coarse polyphonies and vocal gymnastics intended by Wagner. I shall begin, not to believe in this theory, but to consider it seriously, when I see an actress who, having proved that she possesses the power and passion to play Juliet in Shakespeare's way, shall deliberately, and out of pure artistic conviction, forswear these crude thrills and ecstasies, and re-study the part after the fashion of Mrs. Campbell. In the meantime, I can only marvel to see lack of force, lack of skill, and lack of understanding, accepted as the revelation of a new art.

Shakespeare has in these days unjustly elbowed aside some other deserving dramatists. Sir Augustus Harris, Mr. Cecil Raleigh, and Mr. Henry Hamilton have produced at Drury Lane a pictorial melodrama named *Cheer, Boys, Cheer!** which fully sustains the reputation of the energetic triumvirate. The first act

* September 19—December 14. Reproduced at Olympic, December 19—still running.

is quite amusing. There is a modern Macaire in it who really delighted me, and as a piece of melodramatic farce the whole scene was far from despicable. Some of its dialogue rose distinctly above the ordinary Drury Lane level. When the scenic marvels set in, my interest languished, but not that of the audience. Polo at Hurlingham, Rotten Row in the season, a fight in Matabeleland, and a reception in a great West-end mansion—these are the principal courses in Sir Augustus Harris's only too lavish bill of fare; and the public worked through them with unsated appetite. All the scenes are bright and effective in their way, and it is said that "The Last Stand" accurately reproduces a recent episode in South African history. There was certainly plenty of that bluster-cum-blubber which invariably accompanies the operations of her Majesty's forces in melodrama. The piece was well played, especially by the villains—Mr. Charles Dalton and Mrs. Raleigh—and the comic personages, Mr. Giddens, Mr. Lionel Rignold, Miss Fanny Brough, and Miss Pattie Browne. Mr. Henry Neville, as the noble hero, comported himself with a truly impressive dignity, and Miss Eleanor Calhoun played the thankless part of the heroine with a good deal of feeling.

An indescribably extravagant and intricate absurdity, entitled *In a Locket*,* by Messrs. Harry and

* September 16—October 30.

Edward A. Paulton, was received with great laughter by the first-night audience at the Strand Theatre. It does not, perhaps, stand quite on the lowest level of farce; here and there one may trace a touch of ingenuity in the complications; but its merits, such as they be, are distinctly unpretending. Mr. Harry Paulton's own part is largely made up of a sort of patter bearing no resemblance to conceivable human speech; but his stolid humour is now and then amusing enough.

XLIII.

"HER ADVOCATE."

9th October.

ONE need have no hesitation in declaring *Her Advocate*,* at the Duke of York's Theatre,† the best play Mr. Walter Frith has produced; but that it could easily be without touching the summits of dramatic literature. There is a capital idea in it—an idea of which I remember making a mental note when I came across it, some twenty years ago, in Grenville Murray's *French Pictures in English Chalk*. In those blithesome and innocent days, I used to dream of writing plays myself, and might very likely have tackled this subject, but that I shrank from the

* September 26—November 30.

† Formerly the Trafalgar Square Theatre.

difficulty of bringing a lady, accused of murder, into personal and private consultation with an English barrister at the very outset of her case. This difficulty has had no terrors for Mr. Frith, and experts declare that he has got over it plausibly enough. The fact, that is to say, of Mrs. Field's appearance in George Abinger's chambers, does not cry out against etiquette and probability; but that does not prove the ensuing consultation to be either plausible or dramatic. The inherent strength of the situation carried it down on the first night; but Mr. Frith has in reality handled it very feebly. Mrs. Field's hysterical collapse immediately on her entrance is a glaring technical error. We know nothing about her as yet, so her tears do not move us; and the long pause of uninteresting and commonplace "business" merely serves to relax the tension of interest. Then her story is clumsily told, with no ingenuity of development, while Abinger's comments are quite obvious, and reveal none of that acumen which we expect, and have a right to expect, in judicial drama. Mr. Frith may object that a Q.C. is not a detective; I reply that, for the nonce, he is—that the structure, nay, the idea, of the play forces him to combine the detective with the advocate—and that there is no fun in the thing unless he makes some little show of abnormal sagacity. After Dr. Marshall's entrance, indeed, Mr. Frith flies to the other extreme, and

makes Abinger act as though he had the whole case at his fingers' ends. For instance, he has not the remotest ground for threatening Marshall with an exposure of "his own gross negligence as a medical man"; that is a flash of miraculous intuition. Marshall's conduct, too, is no less incredible than Abinger's attitude in meeting it. The whole scene is neither conceivable as a piece of life nor convincing as a piece of drama; and it has the further disadvantage of making Marshall's appearance at the trial an act of sheer madness.

The second act is brightened by the character of the bibulous Irish barrister, who has nothing to do with the play, but, as acted by Mr. J. H. Barnes, is the best thing in it. Here, on the other hand, the hero develops a fondness for flowery and melodramatic magniloquence—not at all of the forensic order—which destroys our last shred of belief in him. The scene in the prison raises a curious technical question. You know the idea—the Q.C. has fallen madly in love with his client, and, believing passionately in her innocence, and never doubting that she loves him in return, is determined to secure for her a triumphant acquittal. Just at the crucial moment, however, he learns that she loves another man, and, overwhelmed by this disillusion, has still to face the ordeal and plead her cause. The conjuncture would be still more dramatic if the revelation

of this love were to put a different complexion on the murder, and, by introducing a new motive, shake the advocate's faith in his client's innocence. I forget whether this is the case in Grenville Murray's story; it is an obvious development, at any rate, which Mr. Frith neglects. And now comes the technical point: Ought the author to have let the audience into the secret of Mrs. Field's love for another man? or did he act wisely in keeping us as much in the dark as Abinger himself? I am no bigoted believer in the maxim that a secret must never be kept from the audience; yet I think Mr. Frith would have done better to have given us an early inkling of the true state of affairs. To keep the secret, in this case, is not merely to leave the audience in doubt, but to place them upon a false scent, which is always a mistake. And, besides, the revelation would certainly have been more effective had we been led, however vaguely, to anticipate it. As it was, the thing came upon us with a short sharp shock of surprise, and was over and done with before we had time to grasp the situation or work up any emotion about it.

The third act consists of a trial-scene, neither better nor worse than many other stage trial-scenes of recent days. It, again, is written without the true "fingering of the dramatist"—with all his praiseworthy industry and enthusiasm, that is what

Mr. Frith lacks. The effect of Dr. Marshall's appearance in the witness-box was discounted by the fact that, after the way he had displayed his cards at the end of the first act, it was sheer lunacy for him to show face at all. Mr. Somerset played the harassed and haunted criminal very ably, but the ablest acting, in such a scene, will not supply the place of a sound logical foundation. A very similar incident in the last act of *Dark Days*, at the Haymarket, was much better led up to, and consequently more effective. The quaint behaviour of the judge was, I presume, founded on fact, or at any rate on anecdote. If so, it afforded a good instance of a "human document" cited out of season, for it certainly impaired the verisimilitude of the scene.

Pray observe that I have endeavoured to deal with Mr. Frith's play on its own level, without complaining that it does not rise to other altitudes. It is simply a story-play, in which we need not look for any higher quality than dexterity in the telling of the story. It is of the lack of this quality that I complain—not of the lack of serious character-study, philosophy, passion, or style, which are not to be expected in this class of work. Sardou, not Dumas, is Mr. Frith's model; when he comes anywhere near the model he has chosen, it will be time enough to inquire whether he might not have chosen a higher one.

Mr. Cartwright plays the Q.C. with that veiled

intensity which is the note of his manner. If Miss Gertrude Kingston made little of the heroine, it was in nowise her fault—the author had given her no real opportunity. Miss Lena Ashwell showed grace and sincerity in the undesirable part of a deserted damsel who is not content to wear the willow quietly, but must needs flaunt it in the eyes of the world. Mr. Oswald Yorke and Miss Henrietta Watson played minor parts with ease and intelligence.

XLIV.

“POOR MR. POTTON.”

16th October.

SINCE the failure, or comparative failure, of *The Ladies' Idol*, and the success, or apparent success, of *The Strange Adventures of Miss Brown*, I have had to renounce one of my most cherished illusions. I plumed myself on being a man of the people, a typical representative of the British Public, in my tastes and distastes with regard to farce. On other subjects the British Public and I might occasionally differ, but on this one topic, at least, I was proud to believe that we were unanimous. Farces which amused me succeeded, farces which bored me failed, until at the Vaudeville and Terry's I had come to revel in a sense of restful solidarity with the kindly

race of men. But, alas! within the past few months the British Public and I seem to have got out of tune; our minds have no longer a single thought, our hearts have ceased to beat as one. When the cleverest farce of the season (bar one) fails, and the stupidest farce (bar none) succeeds, one's sense of solidarity begins to waver, and the kindly race of men seems almost as incomprehensible at the Vaudeville as at the Adelphi, at Terry's as at Drury Lane. I shall venture on no forecast, then, as to the chances of *Poor Mr. Potton*,* by Messrs. Clarence Hamlyn and H. M. Paull. It seemed to me to stand, in point of merit, about half-way between its two predecessors on the Vaudeville stage—rather nearer, perhaps, to *The Ladies' Idol* than to *Miss Brown*. The authors have a pretty knack of humorous dialogue; and humour, in farce, goes further than wit. Every here and there a fantastic repartee or unforeseen turn of phrase would send round the theatre one of those sudden little shocks of laughter, for the sake of which much may be forgiven. And there was a good deal to forgive, especially in the later acts. In the first, we had a really comic situation in poor Mr. Potton's well-meant attempt to ingratiate himself with Mrs. Dashwood's "chicks" by means of presents of toys—the said "chicks" being two full-grown young ladies and a muscular medical student. Amusing, too, if a

* October 10—December 2.

little overdone, is the welcome accorded by the "chicks" to their prospective stepfather. But already at the end of the first act we feel that the authors have neglected to carry forward our interest. They have diverted us with a succession of comic scenes and quaint sayings, but they have not aroused our curiosity, and still less awakened our expectation, as to what is to follow. If Messrs. Hamlyn and Paull will look at, say, any one of Mr. Pinero's successful farces, they will find that at the end of the first act the matter of the second act is clearly foreshadowed, and our interest is vividly excited. When the curtain falls on the first act of *The Magistrate*, we foresee the meeting of all the characters at the Hôtel des Princes, and are eager to know what comes of it. In *The Schoolmistress*, we would not for worlds miss Peggy Hesseltine's party, which we know awaits us in Act II. In *Poor Mr. Potton*, on the other hand, we neither know nor care what is coming. We guess, of course, that Potton will somehow wriggle out of Mrs. Dashwood's toils, but how, when, or where, we have not the slightest idea. In Mr. Pinero's farces, and in the best French work, such as *The Pink Dominoes* or *The Candidate*, there is always an *adventure* afoot, and we want to see its progress and issue. Here there is nothing of the sort. The action might go on for ever, or end at any moment. As a matter of fact, it starts off on a new line in the second act, the

"chicks" being now as anxious to promote their mother's marriage as they formerly were to prevent it. This second act, though amusing at points, is really purposeless and empty. It could be omitted without leaving a sensible gap in the story. If you pay microscopic attention to it, indeed (as we critics of course must), you will prick up your ears at the statement that Potton's grandfather married an actress, and wonder what is going to come of it. I did not fail to wonder, but I entirely failed to foresee or conjecture the device by which the authors get their hero out of his hobble. It may have been my obtuseness that was at fault; but I wonder how many people in the audience had even the vaguest suspicion of the true state of affairs? The device, when at last revealed, is an ingeniously fantastic one; but I cannot think that the authors have worked up to it with any skill. There are many amusing speeches scattered here and there amid the boisterous horse-play of the last act; and the horse-play itself seemed to delight the audience. One final word, though, to Messrs. Hamlyn and Paull. It seems to me that their farce would have been more attractive if they had made it a little less sordid. There is not a single sympathetic touch in the whole play. The motives of the characters fluctuate between light-hearted selfishness and utter baseness. Cynicism has its artistic justification: it is, after all, a method of

interpreting life ; but this casual grimness, due simply to the exigencies of the comic intrigue, became a little tedious. I wonder whether the inexhaustible vogue of *Charlie's Aunt* may not be due in part to the fact that it is an amiable and not at all inhuman piece of absurdity.

The acting is capital. Mr. Weedon Grossmith is always a delight to me, and the authors have in this case given him a fairly effective part. Miss May Palfrey is bright and pleasant as one of the "chicks," and Miss Gladys Homfrey plays their much-married mother—a part which might easily be made offensive—with no less discretion than humour. Miss F. Haydon, too, is excellent as old Mrs. Potton ; and Miss Alice Beet is a delightful slavey. Mr. Beauchamp did his best with a rather primitive part, but he should note that the first diphthong in "Fräulein" is pronounced "oy" not "aw." Mr. Tom Terriss proves to be the living image of his father—only more so. Mr. F. Saker must surely have misinterpreted the part of the solicitor's clerk ; at least, I could discover no meaning in it as he played it.

XLV.

"THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT."

23rd October.

GENIUS, said some one or other, is an infinite capacity for taking pains; and if it is to seek utterance on the English stage, he might have added, it must be accompanied by an infinite capacity for ignoring insult. Since he produced *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* two years and a half ago, Mr. Pinero's position has been a peculiar one. He has drawn down on himself the wrath—yes, the contemptuous and vindictive wrath—of two classes of critics: those for whom the drama died with Congreve, and those for whom it only began to live in Ibsen. The former class hated the theatre simply *as* the theatre, and fiercely resented the suggestion that anything worth a moment's notice could come out of it. They felt it tactless on Mr. Pinero's part to exist at all, and they repaid the impertinence in kind. The latter class made Ibsen's technique and their own temperament the measure of all dramatic excellence, and would put up with nothing short of excellence according to these standards. Because Mr. Pinero looked at life from his own angle, and treated it by his own methods, they had no recognition for him, no encouragement, not even helpful remonstrance—nothing but im-

patient and intolerant scorn. At most they grudgingly allowed that if he would keep to farce he might rank in their esteem not much below the authors of *The Strange Adventures of Miss Brown*. The position of the nihilists (if I may call them so) is much more rational than that of our haughty idealists. Hating the stage, the nihilists naturally did their best to stamp out any spark of vitality they could discern in that quarter. But the idealists professed to love the stage, and to be working, both by precept and example, for a free, thoughtful, and virile drama, in the near future. It has always seemed to me to show the densest ingratitude on their part that they should have had nothing but sneers and disparagement for the man who was gallantly fighting their own battles, though perhaps with other weapons than theirs. Mr. Pinero, fortunately, heeded neither the one set of detractors nor the other, but kept steadily on his way. *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, despite its errors of detail, was a distinct advance on *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. It was larger in aim and subtler in method. It revealed, to my thinking (and I did not gloze the matter), a certain inadequacy in Mr. Pinero's philosophical equipment; but it showed nothing but progress in artistic power and sincerity. At any rate, it did even more than its predecessor to widen the domain open to the English dramatist. If, after *Mrs. Ebbsmith*, Mr. Pinero had chosen to rest

on his oars—if he had returned, for the nonce, to sentimental or fantastic comedy, and given us another *Sweet Lavender* or *Dandy Dick*—I, for my part, should neither have wondered nor complained. It was with some vague expectation of the sort, indeed, that I came to the theatre last Wednesday night. All the keener was my pleasure on recognising, as the so-called comedy unfolded itself, no reversion to older themes or methods, but another, and this time a quite unmistakable, movement in advance. *The Benefit of the Doubt** is the truest, firmest, finest thing Mr. Pinero has yet done. The first two acts are masterly; there are, I think, technical errors, defects of manipulation, in the last act, but it, too, is essentially right. The play not only confirms our belief in Mr. Pinero's talent—it heightens our hopes of his future.

It is a sufficiently shady circle into which the dramatist introduces us—a shallow-souled, frivolous, unidea'd set. There is more of Hogarth than of Du Maurier in his social picture. But in what direct, sober, significant touches it is drawn! With what economy of means and breadth of effect! And sharp as is the satire, it is not inhuman. This vulgar, worldly-minded family, hovering on the outskirts of vice, and restrained from it rather by absence of passion than by presence of principle, is yet by no

* Comedy Theatre, October 16—December 27.

means devoid of redeeming traits. The feeble and flighty mother, the cynical and slangy elder daughter, the nincompoop son, and the pompous, egotistical busybody of an uncle, are yet a kindly and not ill-meaning crew, held together by very genuine family affection. The aunt, Mrs. Cloys, is a fine creature in her narrow-minded way, and is drawn with delightful humour. Her little outburst at the end of the first act is a true touch of genius, human and dramatic. As for Theophila, she really lights up the picture for me. There is excellent stuff in that little woman, and I wish her lines had fallen in pleasanter places than between a stick of a Scotch laird and a slip of a horsey squireen. She is worth twenty of her implacable adversary, the fierce and narrow egoist, Olive Allingham, who is, however, the strongest character-study in the play—as good in its way as Mrs. Tanqueray. If there were nothing else in *The Benefit of the Doubt*, it would be no small achievement for any author to have drawn, within the limits of a three-act play, two such rounded characters as Theo and Olive. And with all her ungoverned perversity of nature, even Olive is not odious; wherefore I say that Mr. Pinero has succeeded in keeping his satire well on the hither side of cynicism and brutality. The play is certainly not an agreeable one. It presents two pairs of commonplace, prosaic, irreflective characters, placed practically at a dead-

lock. There is no even moderately satisfactory issue from the tangle. Divorce, for instance, would not help them. The mischief lies in the characters themselves, not in their circumstances. Thus the "comedy" is in reality a somewhat sordid character-tragedy; but it seems to me that Mr. Pinero has refrained, with true artistic instinct, from making his picture intolerably grimy and repellent.

So much for the substance of the play; now for its form and composition. The theme is admirably chosen, and its everyday elements are woven without the slightest strain into highly dramatic conjunctions. Technically, nothing could be better than the first act. We are in the thick of the action at once, or at least in the thick of the interest, so that the exposition, instead of being, so to speak, a mere platform from which the train is presently to start, becomes an inseparable part of the movement. The sense of dramatic irony is strongly and yet delicately suggested. We foresee a "peripety"—apparent prosperity suddenly crumbling into disaster—within the act itself; and, when it comes, it awakens our sympathy and redoubles our interest. Mr. Pinero here displays to perfection that art to which I alluded last week, of arousing at the end of one act vivid and eager anticipation of what is to follow in the next. We feel much more than mere curiosity—we feel active concern, almost anxiety, as though our own personal

interests were involved in the matter. And the second act has not proceeded five minutes before our anticipation becomes positively breathless. As soon as Mrs. Allingham is installed in her husband's house, we foresee the delightfully tragi-comic conjuncture brought about by the arrival of the Cloys-Portwood embassy, and on the top of that the dire complication of Theophila's appearance. It is all quite probable, natural, and yet intensely, thrillingly dramatic. And how excellently it is written! Avoiding artificial wit or rhetoric, Mr. Pinero again and again, and yet again, hits on precisely the word of the situation—the one phrase which can reveal in a flash its full dramatic potency. We shall have some critics, I dare say, objecting to the “overhearing” as a piece of stage conventionalism. But the distinction is obvious between your ordinary, casual overhearing, which occurs simply because it is convenient that some one should find out something he is not intended to know, and a deliberately planned test or ordeal which is the essence of the drama. The scene between Allingham and Theo, with Olive in the library, is as legitimate as that between Hamlet and Ophelia, with the King and Polonius in the alcove. As for poor Theophila's breakdown at the close, it is painful, no doubt, and well-nigh squalid to the conception; but it is so lifelike, so inevitable, one feels not only that Mr. Pinero's daring is justifiable, but

that not to have dared would almost have been a treachery to truth. The scene is one of Fate's grim pleasantries. I find only two things to cavil at in this masterly act. There is a little too much ingenuity of pre-arrangement for the final scene, too much insistence on the acoustic relations between the hall and the library; and the scene of embarrassment which follows the entrance of the Cloys-Portwood trio is a little too protracted. A woman like Mrs. Cloys would certainly have taken any means to cut it short at an earlier point.

The third act is technically much less excellent. I wish Mr. Pinero had seen his way to wind the thing up briefly in three or four strong, clear-cut scenes between the four principal characters—or five, including Mrs. Cloys as *dea ex machinâ*. The flittings in and out of the whole troop of relations are improbable and distracting, and Sir Fletcher Portwood in particular becomes positively tedious. I suppose Mr. Pinero felt that for the Comedy Theatre he must produce a comedy; but we nowadays care little for labels, if only we are given a work of art. And there is a more radical defect in this act—the author fails to afford us any inkling of the end towards which he is working. Through scene after scene we appear to be making no progress, but going round and round in a depressing circle. There were moments, and even minutes, when the patience of the audience was

visibly strained almost to snapping—partly, no doubt, because of defects in the acting, but mainly on account of the author's omission to provide us with any point of issue on which to fix our expectations. Yet the essentials of the act were, to my thinking, right enough—it was the superfluities that jarred, and the sense of hopeless deadlock that oppressed us. It is difficult, no doubt, in a picture-play as opposed to a problem-play, to forecast any definite issue. There is here no problem which can be formally solved, and of which we may be supposed to foresee and desire the solution. That is, from one point of view, the great advantage of the theme; that is what makes the general effect of the play so lifelike. Mr. Pinero is not constructing a pattern, or following out a predetermined curve which must pass through certain points to a given end. He is painting a picture, largely, leisurely. We do not feel that every word is strictly conditioned by its relation to a hard-and-fast scheme. We are conscious throughout of space for a little marginal illustration. The dialogue is not a cemented mosaic, but reproduces, within limits set by a fine artistic instinct, the fluidity of life, the ebb and flow of emotion. But I take it to be essential that the margin should narrow as the story goes on; whereas in this case, it is, if anything, wider in the third act than in the first. And, though there was no absolute solution to be arrived at, Mr. Pinero might

have allowed us dimly to divine a possible "way out."

The acting was not, on the whole, fortunate, though Miss Winifred Emery and Miss Rose Leclercq were admirable and invaluable as Theophila and Mrs. Cloys. Miss Lily Hanbury, Mr. Leonard Boyne, and Mr. J. G. Grahame, on the other hand, were all more or less inadequate to the problems set them; and even Mr. Cyril Maude, clever actor as he is, did not seem quite the man for Sir Fletcher Portwood.

A play, according to Auguste Vitu, should contain a painting, a judgment, and an ideal. Mr. Pinero has given us the painting; the judgment we need not insist on, for judgments are generally wrong; but it would do no harm if, in subsequent works, he could manage to throw in a touch of the ideal.

XLVI.

"THE RISE OF DICK HALWARD."

30th October.

SUPERLATIVES are always to be handled with caution, so I will not say that *The Rise of Dick Halward*, at the Garrick,* is the most childish play I ever saw. But this I will say, that I can remember no play

* October 19—November 9 (with occasional performances of *The Professor's Love-Story* interposed).

produced at an evening performance at a West-End theatre so absolutely devoid of intelligence in conception and skill in execution. Its one merit is a certain rough-and-tumble, harum-scarum humour in the opening scenes. Mr. Jerome has an eye for the small absurdities of lodging-house life, and a relish for the good-fellowship and animal spirits of bachelor Bohemianism. But as soon as the ladies come on the scene, the humour sinks into vulgarity, and the play becomes as unpleasant as it is preposterous.

Dick Halward, son of a country doctor (you will see presently why a surgery is indispensable), has been in Mexico, but has come home and gone to the Bar. This step he regrets, because, as he puts it epigrammatically, "It's easier to get silver out of the ground than out of men's pockets." As he is soliloquising to this effect (he out-Hamlets Hamlet in soliloquacity), enter a letter from Mexico. An old comrade of his has bequeathed to him, with his dying ink-drops, a fortune of half a million dollars, in trust to deliver it over to his (the old comrade's) long-lost son, who is nineteen, and probably goes by the name of Englehart—that is the sole clue afforded for his discovery. All this the dying miner states in a letter; the will itself, on the face of it, leaves the property absolutely to Halward. Sagacious old miner! he knew that clues would be superfluous, for the long-lost son would inevitably be just at Dick's

elbow. It is the nature of long-lost sons (as the author of *Stageland* has, or ought to have, pointed out) always to be hanging around precisely where they are wanted—or not wanted. But Dick, being comparatively unused to the ways of the world, does not realise this, and little dreams that the youngster who shares his chambers with him is the very man. He is called, not Englehart, but Reggie Philbrick (don't ask me why!), and there is no reason to believe that he is a long-lost son at all. But such trifles would not baffle Dick if he had any knowledge of the workings of Providence, as revealed in the British Drama. Presently two ladies come to tea with Dick and Reggie; their "young women" I suppose one ought to call them. Noticing the tidiness of the room (or something of that sort), Dick's young woman observes to Reggie's, "What capital husbands they'd make if we ever wanted such things!" Then, when some piece of masculine make-shift comes to the surface, the same young woman remarks to Dick, "I won't have you about a house of mine;" and again, when she sits down to toast the muffins, "How delightful it is for you to see me playing housewife at your fireside!" After a few such airy railleries, it would not surprise us if these damsels exchanged hats with their swains, and the whole quartette departed for a happy afternoon on Hampstead Heath. On the other hand, words cannot

picture our astonishment when Dick's young woman informs him that she cannot marry him because he is "poor, as the nicest fellows usually are," whereas she cannot exist on less than £5000 a year! She has a soul above muffins. "I must," she says, "have *choice wines and dainty foods*. I must see rich jewels *sparkling on my own white arm*." (The expressions in italics are her very words; the context I supply from memory.) Therewithal the two heroines take themselves off, or are taken off by a haughty mamma; and we realise with amazement that they are not young persons released from their duties by the Thursday early-closing movement, but represent Mr. Jerome's conception of what he would no doubt call Society ladies. Dick Halward, crushed by Madge's mercenariness, exhales his woe in another long soliloquy, offering to sell his soul to Satan for £5000 a year; and at that word he lays his hand, quite promiscuous-like, on—what?—you will never guess—why, on his Mexican friend's will! Half a million dollars at five per cent.—£5000 a year to a fraction! Such is the scrupulous accuracy of the Devil's arithmetic. After some wrestlings of conscience, all in soliloquy, Dick burns the letter, and prepares to take out probate of the will for his own behoof and benefit.

Now, if Mr. Jerome had even the skill to get its little modicum of dramatic effect out of this theme,

he would show us Dick Halward apparently prospering for some time on his ill-gotten wealth. But not a bit of it! In the very first scene of the second act we find the game is up. The deceased miner, Reggie's father, wrote his letter to Dick seated in the doorway of a hut; a chance photographer took a snap-shot at him; and on returning to England the chance photographer has nothing more pressing to do than to chance upon the one man who knows Reggie's history, and to show him the photo of the dying miner, whom he at once recognises. By aid of a microscope, the letter he is writing can be deciphered; and thus Dick's fraud is discovered, though as yet it is not known that he is the criminal. Mr. Jerome avers that this incident is quite possible, for he has tested it. The part played by the camera and the microscope may be possible enough; but that does not diminish the puerility of the conception, or strike off a single link from the monstrous concatenation of chances involved in it. The thing simply insults the intelligence. "But soft!" you say. "Perhaps Mr. Jerome justifies or palliates the absurdity by extracting from it a powerful situation. One can foresee a capital scene when Dick Halward is confronted, as if by magic, with the very words of the letter which he has so carefully destroyed." Yes, any one can foresee it—except Mr. Jerome. No such cheap and obvious effects for him! He is careful to

make the man who hands Dick the copy of the letter explain beforehand how it has been obtained, so that Dick, though doubtless surprised and disgusted, is not in the least thunderstruck, and manifests no emotion. Thus we approach one solitary dramatic moment only to sheer off from it; and the action shambles along as best it may.

Dick's young woman, you must know, agrees to marry him now that he has £5000 a year; but though she has no reason to suspect that the stipulated sum is dishonestly come by, she now hates him and overwhelms him with contempt. I presume this is psychological subtlety on Mr. Jerome's part. Indeed, I think I can vaguely divine the idea that must have been in his mind; but, as he has never for a moment made Madge credible to us, her revulsion of self-contempt interests us not a whit. In spite of the extraordinary density of all concerned, suspicion begins to centre upon Dick. He manages to avert it for a time; but in order to do so he has to tell a lie—indeed, several lies. This his proud nature cannot brook. Robbery, yes, at a pinch; but fibbing, never! He abstracts a dose of prussic acid from his father's medicine shelf—now you see why his dear old dad is a doctor—and, calling all his friends around him, he confesses his villainy. They go off in silent amazement, Madge last, and he seizes the poisoned chalice. But mark, now, how his habit of solilo-

quising stands him in good stead. If he drank the potion *sans phrase*, there would be an end of Dick Halward. But of course he must have his usual soliloquy, must tell himself how he once saw a dog die of prussic acid, and so forth; and this gives Madge time to search her soul, and discover that, now that he is a pauper and a criminal, she loves him with all the devotion of her passionate nature. She returns to the surgery just in time to stay his hand as he raises the goblet to his lips, and they determine, in the orthodox fashion, to begin a new life in a new land.

One would pity Mr. Willard in the part of Dick were it not that he presumably chose it for himself. To Miss Marion Terry, on the other hand, who struggled gallantly with the young lady of the white arms and the dainty foods, I offer my respectful sympathy. Mr. Esmond and Miss Annie Hughes were bright enough as the comic lovers, and Miss Winifred Fraser was excellent in the small part of a slavey. Mr. Jerome seemed at one time to promise well as a farce-writer, but he appears to have no talent whatever for serious drama. *Dick Halward* has, I understand, been successful in America; and if criticism can make the fortune of a play, it ought to succeed here as well. Such inexplicable chances do occur in the theatrical world, but they are rare exceptions. I am sure Mr. Jerome is only laying up

disappointment for himself if he lets his good luck in the present instance persuade him to go on working the same vein.

Messrs. Lewis Waller and H. H. Morell have re-produced Mr. Carton's entertaining romance, *The Home Secretary*, at the Shaftesbury Theatre.* If poetry consisted in abundance of metaphor, *The Home Secretary* would be one of the most poetical plays in the language. There are passages in it—for instance, the after-dinner chat of the Home Secretary and the Solicitor-General—as gorgeous with imagery as any prismatic patch in *Troilus and Cressida*. Apart from this mannerism (which is preferable, after all, to mere vapid vulgarity of talk) the play is quite amusing, and lets itself be seen with pleasure. Mr. Lewis Waller, Miss Neilson, Miss Maude Millet, and Mr. Sydney Brough resume their original parts, while Mr. Fred Terry replaces Mr. Wyndham and Miss Lottie Venne Miss Mary Moore.

XLVII.

“TRILBY”—“THE LORD MAYOR”—“MRS.
PONDERBURY'S PAST.”

6th November.

A DRAMATIC romance named *Trilby* was produced at the Haymarket Theatre† last Wednesday. It is

* See p. 144.

† October 30—still running.

written by an American playwright, Mr. Paul M. Potter, and is stated to be "dramatised from George Du Maurier's novel." I fancy I have heard of this work, and several people in the audience seemed to have read it. A play, however, must stand or fall on its own merits, and I have not thought it necessary to acquaint myself with Mr. Potter's alleged original. Not that I have any prejudice against the dramatisation of novels. So far as I am concerned, the dramatist may take his material wherever he finds it; my business is with the use he makes of it. But it is my right, and my duty, to place myself in the position of the man who knows nothing beforehand of the plot and characters—an end which I can most securely attain by actually being that man.

Without hesitation, then, I can declare that Mr. Potter has told his story clearly enough within the limits of his four acts. This was all the easier as he had very little story to tell. Let me briefly set down what I make of it, that those who know the book may judge for themselves how much or how little of its effect Mr. Potter has got over the footlights. Trilby O'Ferrall, the daughter of a drunken Irish Bohemian, is cast adrift at an early age in the students' quarter of Paris. She has a nature of gold, and passes unsullied through the trials and temptations of a model's existence. Three more or less English artists, nicknamed Taffy, The Laird, and

Little Billee, fall in love with her, and she loves Little Billee, who is determined to marry her in spite of his mother's opposition. But a Franco-German-Jewish musician named Svengali sees in her an opportunity for making his fortune. She has a splendid voice, inherited from her father, but no ear for music, so that she cannot sing a note in tune. No matter! Svengali will hypnotise her, and inspire her with his own genius. In a state of hypnotic trance, she leaves Paris with him on the day before she was to have married Little Billee, and is not heard of for five years. Then, one evening, the three artists and all their friends happen to meet at a sort of Parisian Alhambra, where a new star, Madame Svengali, is to appear. They at once recognise her as Trilby; but she does not know them, for she has been all this time under the hypnotic spell of the wicked enchanter Svengali, who has beaten and ill-used her in order to make her sing. The incessant strain of hypnotising and being hypnotised has meanwhile almost exhausted both his and her vitality, so that they are both at death's door. She sings one song, "Ben Bolt," with enormous applause; but in the interval between her two "turns" Svengali encounters the three artists, quarrels with them, and dies of heart disease. She, not knowing of his death, attempts to sing her second song, but makes only hideous noises, and is hissed off the stage. Then

she has a fever, and, recovering, is once more about to marry Little Billee; but the malignant wizard, from his grave, sends her his portrait for a marriage present, and the shock of seeing his face kills her.

We have here, then, a fantastic fairy-tale—a mixture of Mürger and Hoffmann. It appeals throughout to the imagination, not to the intelligence. I had almost said that it addresses itself to the child in us, not to the man; but children have a habit of asking, "Is it true?" and that we deliberately refrain from doing. These things are told us, and we listen to them, not because they pretend to be actually or symbolically true, but because they somehow or other tickle the fancy. The lighter side of the picture charms us by its very familiarity. The "primrose by the gutter's brim," spotless and virginal in the midst of corruption, is always gratifying to our passion for antithesis. (I am told that in the book she is not immaculate; but American chivalry has expunged her past.) Familiar, too, are the three sworn friends, all in love with the same woman, two of whom remain her trusty champions after she has given her love to the third. These legendary figures are always agreeable to the imagination, and they are here presented with a good-humoured quaintness which lends them an air of novelty. As for the dark side of the picture, its charm is simply the sempiternal fascination of

diablerie. Not for nothing does Svengali wear the features of a gargoyle from some mediæval minster. He is lineally descended from the Devil of the Miracle Plays, own brother to Mephistopheles, and first cousin to the Pied Piper of Hamelin, and a whole tribe of demon musicians. Why this grotesque hocus-pocus should enchant us I really do not know, but, for my own part, I am not at all exempt from its influence. Our Gothic ancestors no doubt revive in us, and the terrors which made them what Stevenson calls "midnight twitterers," coming down to us attenuated by scepticism, are found readily available as æsthetic motives. The Goth is not the highest element in our composition. He lives in our nerves, whereas the Greek lives in our intellect. But since the nerves respond automatically to the stimulus of theatrical effect, whereas the intellect responds only through a voluntary effort, when Goth meets Greek in the theatre there is practically no tug of war—the Goth holds the field. That is why Sir Henry Irving's *Faust*—a vulgar piece of diablerie—outstripped in popularity his most distinguished and beautiful productions. That is why Mr. Tree's Svengali—a performance not vulgar, indeed, but superficial and facile—will very likely prove the great success of his life, and become as closely associated with his name as Dundreary with Sothorn's or Rip Van Winkle with Jefferson's. When I add that the heroine of the

nursery-tale—the Beauty of this Beast—is a beauty indeed, with precisely the right quality of fresh and childlike loveliness, you will readily understand how wide, how universal, is its appeal. Its atmosphere of painting and music is also greatly in its favour. Three acts out of the four pass in a studio, than which there can be no more attractive scene—unless it be the *foyer* of a theatre, in which the remaining act is placed. Svengali's quality as a musician, too, makes "slow music" an essential element in the action, and quite naturally converts a great part of the play into what the Germans call "melodrame"—dialogue spoken through music. Thus all possible ingredients of popularity have, by chance or skill, been assembled in this play. Why, the very title, *Trilby*, with its bird-like quaver, acts as a lure to draw people together.

Let me define my meaning with respect to Mr. Tree's Svengali. It is by no means a bad piece of acting—on the contrary, it is quite as good as the play requires or permits. But it stands on a low plane of art, because it is not an effort of observation or composition, but of sheer untrammelled fantasy. Mr. Tree is simply doing what comes easiest to him, luxuriating in obvious and violent gestures and grimaces, expending no more thought on the matter than is involved in the adroit use of his personal advantages and the mechanical resources of stage

effect. Please note that I say this without reproach; Mr. Tree gives the character all the thought that it requires or admits of. He makes the most of his material; but his material is second-rate at best. When I was an idle schoolboy, I remember achieving a great reputation among my classmates by a knack of drawing just such figures as Svengali—spidery monstrosities, with flagrant hair and tentacle-limbs contorted in all sorts of extravagant postures. I had not the remotest talent for drawing, and never attempted to represent a man in natural proportions or conceivable attitudes; but by sheer unbridled whimsicality, I somehow managed to impress the schoolboy imagination and sense of humour. Mr. Tree's Svengali carries this art to its highest pitch; but its highest pitch is low as compared with the summits either of poetical acting, or of such true character-acting as Mr. Tree himself has sometimes given us. To revert to a former illustration, the carvers of the Gothic gargoyles were artists in their way, but we do not class them with Michael Angelo, or even with Houdon. Miss Dorothea Baird, as Trilby, is not only beautiful, but intelligent and unaffected. She is not yet an accomplished actress; there were points, notably in the third act, where one felt that a touch of real inspiration would have transmuted the fairy-tale into tragedy, and thrilled us with terror and pity; but, on the fairy-tale level, Miss

Baird made an absolutely ideal Trilby. Miss Rosina Filippi was an admirable Madame Vinard. Her recognition of the three artists in the third act was the most genuine piece of acting of the whole evening. The other parts were fairly well played, but the interest of the piece would certainly be heightened by a less insignificant Little Billee than Mr. Patrick Evans.* Let me add—I don't know whether it is a confession or a boast—that so thoroughly did I enter into the innocent playfulness of the production that I can scarcely help laughing as I write at the recollection of the Laird's false nose.

The remaining productions of the week need not, unfortunately, detain us long. *The Lord Mayor*,† by Messrs. W. E. Bradley and H. and E. Paulton, at the Strand, is a hash-up of *Vice-Versâ* and Mr. Jones's *Judah*, with a flavour of *Trilby* thrown in. I am not impugning the author's originality, but merely taking the briefest way of indicating the components of the "What-you-Will"—for the authors not unreasonably shrink from taking in vain the sacred name of "farce." Something might have been made, no doubt, of the notion of a temporary rejuvenescence, though I fancy the vein of supernatural farce is pretty nearly worked out. The

* This gentleman was presently replaced by Mr. H. V. Esmond.

† October 31—November 5.

authors, in any case, have placed the idea in an utterly foolish and unattractive setting, and have overlaid it, by way of dialogue, with dense masses of inconceivable patter. The result is hopeless tedium, scarcely enlivened by an occasional flicker of Mr. Harry Paulton's peculiar quaintness. At the Avenue, on the other hand, excellent acting of its kind is thrown away upon the emptiest of French farces, a thing we have seen better done twenty times before. We have really no use, in these days, for work of the calibre of *Madame Mongolin*, by MM. Blum and Toché, Englished by Mr. Burnand under the title of *Mrs. Ponderbury's Past*.^{*} The one originality of the idea is negative—we are spared the usual mother-in-law, all possible odiousness, and more, being concentrated in the wife. There is no approach to common sense in her conduct, or in that of the mutton-like husband, who alleges sleep-walking as an excuse for his delinquencies. Mr. Burnand has done his work neatly enough, and has been marvellously sparing of puns; but the whole humour of the production really consists in not calling things by their names, and in our instinctive retranslation of meaningless English into cynical French. Mr. Charles Hawtrej, though not so amusing as he sometimes is, for the part is a miserable one, seemed to me to show even more than his usual cleverness in

^{*} November 2—still running.

differentiating this particular liar from all the other liars of his repertory. Miss Alma Stanley made of Mrs. Ponderbury a sort of suburban Semiramis, and Miss Lottie Venne did wonders with an irksomely inevitable music-hall divette.

XLVIII.

"THE SQUIRE OF DAMES"—"A TRILBY TRIFLET."

13th November.

It is humiliating to find that, for all our talk about the Renaissance of the Drama, the reconciliation between culture and the stage, etc., etc., it is still possible for a manager to produce, and an audience to accept, not only without protest but with enthusiasm, such vapid Anglo-Gallicisms as *The Squire of Dames*.* One had hoped that the day was past for this sort of thing, and that we no longer lived on crumbs—and in this case stale crumbs—from our neighbours' table. By what sorcery does Mr. Wyndham suppose that a bad old French play can be transformed into a good new English play? His experiment with *Le Demi-Monde* (and that was three years and a half ago) surely did

* November 5—still running.

not result very brilliantly.* Yet *Le Demi-Monde* was in itself a better play than *L'Ami des Femmes*. The fact is, Mr. Wyndham does not care whether a play is good or bad, French or English, antiquated or modern; he simply looks for a showy part, and takes it wherever he finds it. And the audience, with bland docility, makes itself his accomplice. So long as Mr. Wyndham is on the stage, saying more or less witty things in his incomparably airy or aërated fashion, they do not care a jot whether the character, the philosophy, the action as a whole, bears any conceivable relation to life as they know it. This accommodating frame of mind is a survival from the days when Matthew Arnold could write without fear of contradiction: "We in England have no modern drama at all. We have our Elizabethan drama. We have a drama of the last century, and of the latter part of the century preceding. . . . We have apparitions of poetic and romantic drama. . . . But we have no modern drama." This was written in 1879.

* Mr. Wyndham finds in this phrase an implication that *The Fringe of Society* was a financial failure, and assures me, "without giving me permission to publish the figures," that the play ran — weeks, and that the profit amounted to £——, naming in each case a highly satisfactory total. I have assured Mr. Wyndham, in return, that I was not thinking of the financial, but of the artistic, result of his experiment with *Le Demi-Monde*. The expression, however, is no doubt ambiguous, and I regret that it should have caused Mr. Wyndham annoyance.

Sixteen years have passed, and to-day we *have* a modern drama, or the beginnings of one; but unless it is to end ere it is well begun, we must make a firm stand against the indolent and unintelligent managerial methods of the dismal old adaptive days. It is scant encouragement to Mr. Pinero, Mr. Jones, Mr. Grundy, Mr. Carton himself, to find that we are incapable of distinguishing between English manners of to-day and French manners of thirty years ago, or, at any rate, that we are quite content to see personages who bear English names, and are dressed in the fashions of the hour, thinking the thoughts, speaking the words, animated by the ideals and prejudices, of Parisians under the Second Empire. (The Parisians, it is true, did not recognise themselves in the mirror held up by Dumas; but it will scarcely be pretended that this was because his mirror was a magic one, prophetically foreshadowing the London of '95.) The argument that human nature is much the same everywhere and at all times has nothing to do with the present case. There is doubtless an unalterable residuum which constitutes the immortal element in the ideal drama—in the *Antigone*, in *Hamlet*, in *Faust*. But *L'Ami des Femmes* is a play of local and temporary manners if ever there was one. If it was true then and there, it is false here and now; if it was untrue at the Gymnase, it can only be still more untrue at the Criterion. "We

have no modern drama," said Matthew Arnold (to resume where we broke off), "but we have numberless imitations and adaptations from the French. All of these are at the bottom fantastic. We may truly say of them that 'truth and sense and liberty are flown.' And the reason is evident. They are pages out of a life which the ideal of the *homme sensuel moyen* rules, transferred to a life where this ideal does not reign. For the attentive observer the result is a sense of incurable falsity in the piece as adapted." Matthew Arnold's "attentive observer" was evidently in a vanishing minority among the Criterion audience; yet it was practically the same audience which, a few nights before, applauded *The Benefit of the Doubt*—a piece which only attentive observers can really appreciate. Are we to conclude that in both cases it is the mere situations that the mass of the audience applauds, heedless of their relevance or irrelevance, truth or falsity? I fear the conclusion would not be unjust, so far as the mass of the audience is concerned. All the more strongly must criticism insist that observation and art are not entirely thrown away, and that there is always a "remnant" which knows the difference between a fine English play and a tawdry international nondescript.

Dumas himself (differing from Mr. Wyndham) has admitted that *L'Ami des Femmes* is not one of his good plays. "L'action était en dedans," he says,

"et les théories étaient en dehors, faute capitale au théâtre." That was perhaps the capital fault in 1864; to-day we do not trouble to inquire whether the action is internal or external, it is enough that we know it to be ludicrously old-fashioned and tricky. The construction is not really characteristic of Dumas *fils*; it rather suggests Scribe, with touches, now and then, of Dumas *père*. How puerile is the miraculous astuteness of De Ryons, with his prophecies which are always fulfilled by pure chance! He is a creature of cheap romance—a sort of charlatan Sherlock Holmes, whose premises always prove to be wrong or insufficient, while his conclusions, owing to circumstances which he did not and could not foresee, invariably come right. Could anything be clumsier or more far-fetched than the business of the vinaigrette in the second act? And has Scribe himself a more wire-drawn piece of ingenuity than the reconciliation with the husband effected by means of a letter originally intended for the lover?—an incident, by the way, which is coolly annexed in the last act of *An Ideal Husband*. And then the fatuous self-complacency of the ineffable De Ryons! and his intrusiveness! and his impertinence! No, truly, *L'Ami des Femmes* is not one of the happier inspirations of the author of *Monsieur Alphonse* and *Francillon*.

But the French play, after all, is a document in

literary history. Its very faults belong to its epoch, and interest us like the euphuism of Shakespeare or the cynicism of Congreve. De Ryons, too, is undeniably witty. He develops his theories with all Dumas' vivacity of phrase and fertility of illustration. The piece entertained me vastly, I remember, when a certain M. Valbel played De Ryons at the St. James's Theatre, some years ago, before an audience of about twenty, all told. But when it is lifted from its literary context, its sociological basis, and sent a-masquerading in latter-day English dress, it becomes indescribably phantasmal. The fault is not Mr. Carton's. He has done his work with skill and ingenuity. Of course, he has had to eliminate the central idea of his original, and to account for the separation of Mrs. Dennant from her husband on the conventional lines of *The Profligate* or *The Heavenly Twins*. Mrs. Dennant is not, like Jane de Simerose, a would-be rebel against sex, but simply a lady of high moral principle, who has learnt, on her wedding-day, that her husband has been living with another woman. Good and well; the particular case of Jane de Simerose is not very interesting to us on this side of the Channel; but since Mrs. Dennant is only a moral protester, not a physical rebel—since her position would, or at least might, have been just the same had she discovered her husband's delinquency months after marriage, instead of on the marriage day—the

insistence on the exact circumstances of their separation becomes irrelevant and absurd. I cannot, for obvious reasons, be quite explicit on this point; suffice it to say that, at the end of Mr. Carton's third act, the "On vous sauvera, *Mademoiselle!*" addressed by De Ryons to Madame de Simerose is faithfully reproduced; while the stage direction, "Elle cache ses yeux dans sa main, en rougissant de ce dernier mot," is at least indicated, if not emphasised. Most of the audience did not catch the implication, which had, doubtless, eluded the innocent Mr. Redford as well. For myself, I have no objection to it, except that in the English play it had become meaningless. And this is merely typical of the whole production. Its atmosphere is French, not English. The postulates and conventions of this society are all foreign to us. The French drama, especially of the Second Empire, assumes the existence of an idle and wealthy class in which love is the sole and avowed preoccupation of men and women alike. It is an openly polygamous and polyandrous world, the difference between men and women being simply that "tandis que don Juan ajoute tant qu'il peut à sa liste, la femme efface tant qu'elle peut de la sienne." In such a society, an "ami des femmes" of the type here portrayed may possibly find exercise for his curious talent. His business, as he himself says, is to occupy in a woman's heart the interspace between

two passions, and occasionally (but this, it would seem, is a rare and heroic effort) to "save" some one who, from sheer force of fashion, is in danger of throwing herself away upon a lover she does not love. But no such society exists in England. The surface preoccupations of our idle rich are quite other than amatory. If we are not more monogamous than the *monde* of the French drama (which may or may not be a true representation of French society), we are at least more hypocritical in our polygamy. The fundamental postulate of the society we meet in Dumas is that intrigue is the rule, and marital or conjugal fidelity the rare exception. Now, the postulate of English society is quite the reverse; and the postulate probably represents the fact with tolerable accuracy. An English De Ryons, therefore, is impossible in two senses. The intrigues on which he battens are with us sporadic, not endemic; and even if he found some fringe of society where, within the compass of one man's circle of acquaintance, any considerable number of women required his friendly offices, the tone of his comments and generalisations would still be inadmissible. Without the text before me I cannot give instances. The French text is no guide, for of course the greater part of De Ryons's philosophisings, which give the original play its meaning, have disappeared from Mr. Carton's version. Quotation, indeed—unless of whole scenes—would convey no

adequate idea of the all-pervading unreality of thought and expression. Everything is foreign, down to the mere externals of manner, the method of receiving and dismissing guests, for example. Why, the very bore—amusingly played by Mr. De Lange—is a French bore, not an English. Yet Heaven knows we need not go abroad for the article!

As a piece of abstract acting, Mr. Wyndham's performance was excellent, erring only, I thought, in being a little more underbred than the part absolutely demanded. Mr. Kilroy's way of holding his face close up to that of the woman he is talking to is surely not essential, even to a Squire of Dames. Miss Mary Moore was pleasant enough in the part of Mrs. Dennant; Mr. Frank Fenton made a marked impression as her husband; Mr. Bernard Gould was irrepressibly cheerful in the part of the gloomy and suspicious lover; Mr. Alfred Bishop was good as an absent-minded scientist; and Miss Fay Davis showed cleverness and charm in the part of an American millionairess. Such a name, by-the-bye, as “Zoé Nuggetson” is, like the rest of the production, grotesquely out of date—an anachronism within an anachronism. The Squire of Dames, indeed, is a character we all know, but we do not recognise him in this *Ami des Femmes*. Why could not Mr. Wyndham have commissioned Mr. Carton to study the English variety of the type in an English play?

The burlesque of *Trilby** introduced into *Gentleman Joe* ought to be either worked up, or cut down, or both. On the first night it was desperately dull. Mr. Arthur Roberts has caught one or two of Mr. Tree's attitudes, and his mask, of course, it was easy to reproduce; but in the essential element of successful mimicry—the voice—Mr. Roberts was all astray. Miss Kitty Loftus has apparently no turn for imitation. On the other hand, Mr. Eric Thorne reproduced Mr. Hallard's Gecko with a faithfulness too literal to be amusing.

XLIX.

“THE RIVALS”—“NANNIE”—“A MODEL TRILBY”
—“MERRIFIELD'S GHOST.”

20th November.

THE Old Playgoer is a justly unpopular character. He is a nuisance to himself and every one else. At an old comedy in particular, he ought to be compelled to leave his memory in the cloak-room, and not bring it, like a wet blanket, into the stalls. A performance should be judged on its own merits, not crushed by comparisons—necessarily unverifiable—with an ideal representation which never really occurred, but is made up of select reminiscences from a dozen different

* November 7—still running.

revivals scattered over twice or thrice as many years. I am, alas! an Old Playgoer, and though I have not what Mrs. Malaprop calls a "violent memory," I cannot quite "illiterate" from its records certain performances of *The Rivals* which—but no! "we will not anticipate the past; our retrospections shall be all to the present." The revival at the Court Theatre* has at least the merit of being amusing. There is life and spirit in the performance, and, out of eleven characters of importance, eight are competently, if not excellently, acted. Mrs. John Wood's Mrs. Malaprop is irresistibly funny and must be quite convincing to any one but the Old Playgoer. He—curmudgeon that he is—may possibly fancy her a little too eager and emphatic, not quite possessed of the large self-complacency with which Mrs. Malaprop ought to savour the elegancies of her diction. This, however, is really a criticism of perfection. Mrs. Wood cannot remake her temperament, but she plays the part like the accomplished comedian she is. Mr. Farren is the established Sir Anthony of the day, and one would certainly be puzzled to find a better on the present acting list. To my thinking, he does not live the character, but simply plays it for its points. These, however, he makes with real mastery, rising in several passages to a high pitch of virtuosity, at whatever sacrifice of verisimilitude. Mr. Sydney Brough

* November 11—December 21.

is a gay, pleasant, unaffected Jack Absolute, a little lacking in air and manner, or, in other words, a trifle modern; but as that is not a fault he can well be expected to correct, it is useless to dwell upon it. Mr. Brandon Thomas is a slow and stolid but sufficiently amusing Sir Lucius; Mr. Sugden is a passable Faulkland; and the servants are capitally played by Mr. H. Nye Chart (Fag), Mr. W. Cheesman (David), and Miss Marie Hudspeth (Lucy).

With every disposition to keep the Old Playgoer in check, I cannot persuade myself that the three remaining characters, Lydia, Julia, and Acres, are at all adequately treated. Inadequate is precisely the word for Miss Nancy Noel's Lydia Languish; it is much too mild a term for Miss Violet Raye's Julia, in which a great deal of pathetically earnest effort is thrown away for lack of the most elementary skill. Acting, in Miss Raye's eyes, is synonymous with affectation; she is as yet totally innocent of the art which conceals art. This is all the more regrettable as Julia is really a part worth playing. She and Faulkland are the only characters in which Sheridan makes any approach to serious psychology. Faulkland is an admirable study—who does not know the type?—and Julia, if we make reasonable allowance for differences of phraseology, is really a charming woman. They strike us as dull, partly because they are figures of sober comedy who

have somehow strayed into a rattling farce (for so we should class *The Rivals* if Mr. Grundy or Mr. Carton had written it), partly because they are almost always carelessly played by actors who curse their fate in having to condescend to such parts. Mr. Brander Matthews tells us that when Jefferson revived the play in New York, Julia was suppressed altogether! On the other hand, when Mr. Bancroft and Mrs. Bernard Beere played Faulkland and Julia at the Haymarket, their scenes sprang to life, as it were, and became at least as interesting as any in the play. Miss Raye, to do her justice, showed no sense of condescension in approaching Julia. She threw her whole heart into the character; but unfortunately her energies were wholly misdirected. Both she and Miss Noel seemed possessed, among other errors, with the idea that declamation was essential to old comedy; whereas the very art of the thing lies in speaking the formal phrases of the period in such a way as to make them seem, for the moment, graceful and natural.

Mr. Arthur Williams was hopelessly out of place as Acres. His rusticity was cockneyism; it was the mud of Whitechapel, not of Devonshire, that clung to his top-boots. If Acres must needs be vulgar (and I don't see the necessity), at least it should not be with the vulgarity of the music-hall. George Henry Lewes says of the elder Farren (the father of the present Sir Anthony): "He was an actor whose fineness of

observation gave an air of intellectual superiority even to his fools. I do not mean that he represented the fools as intellectual; but that his manner of representing them was such as to impress spectators with a high sense of his intellectual finesse." Now, just as there may be an intellectual foolishness, so there may be, and ought to be, a refined vulgarity. And, in any case, the vulgarity of Acres is not inherent in the part, but the result of a fungoid growth of gags and traditions. The keynote of the character, as your latter-day comedian conceives it, is to be found in the letter-scene, which is one mass of idiotic gags. To the same traditional misreading of the part belong the ridiculous and offensive imitations of Julia's singing, dancing, and so forth, in which Acres indulges in his first scene. In these Mr. Williams simply wallowed, until one felt that Faulkland, so far from being a supersensitive and testy lover, was a miracle of patience. On the other hand, he omitted a really clever and effective gag in the last act, where Acres, seeing the supposed Beverley and his second approaching, says to Sir Lucius, "We—we—we—won't run——*will we?*" The "*Will we?*" is not in Sheridan; but spoken with a thin tremulous quaver of hope, and an appealing look into the fire-eater's eyes, it is irresistibly comic, and at the same time quite in character. I profess no puritanical reverence for Sheridan's text. Several of Mrs. Malaprop's

traditional gags are quite as good as anything Sheridan gave her to say; and I would not for worlds sacrifice David's transmutation of Sir Lucius O'Trigger into Sir Lucifer O'Tiger. But I think the Mrs. Malaprops of the future might well take the part as they find it, and not try to out-Malaprop it from their own fantasy; and I see no reason why we should cherish with superstitious tenderness the silly and vulgar traditions that deform the part of Acres.

Saturday evening at the Opera Comique was one of marked vicissitudes. The audience, unruly at the outset, became almost brutally hostile at the end of the first play, and hysterically enthusiastic at the end of the second. I do not know at this moment whether Mr. T. G. Warren's two-act comedy, *Nannie*,* was played to its predestined close, or was ruthlessly cut short in the flower of its youth. It seemed to me that some one, bewildered by the tumult, casually dropped the curtain about five minutes before its time, and that the actors did not think it worth while to have it up again and go on. They were quite right. The play was an old-fashioned and tedious "comedy-drama," in which it was impossible to take any interest. Miss Farren will have to strengthen this part of her programme. *A Model Trilby; or a Day or two after Du Maurier*† (do you

* November 6—December 2.

† November 16—February 1, 1896.

see the joke in the sub-title?) is a more or less good-humoured travesty of the popular novel and play, written by Messrs. Brookfield and Yardley in rhymes of more or less felicity, and provided by Mr. Meyer Lutz with more or less sparkling music. There is no general idea or consistent scheme in the travesty, but many of the details are quite happily conceived, and after the first five minutes the fun was seldom allowed to flag. Miss Kate Cutler played Trilby gracefully and pleasantly, though she soon dropped all attempt to imitate Miss Baird, and looked, on the whole, more like a reduced copy of Mrs. Langtry. Mr. Robb Harwood, as Svengali, imitated Mr. Tree faithfully enough, but, as it seemed to me, with deficient spirit and fantasy. The Three Musketeers were cleverly played by Mr. Farren Soutar, Mr. C. P. Little, and Mr. George Antley; and Mr. Eric Lewis showed humour and tact in the character of the "Artist-Author." One of the great attractions of the piece will undoubtedly be the Trilby Dance, devised by Mr. W. Ward, and very prettily danced by seven very pretty girls. Miss Farren's appearance at the close, and the storm of cheering which it evoked, formed a rather pathetic close to what had been, on the whole, a merry evening.

Mr. H. M. Paull's comedietta *Merrifield's Ghost*,*

* November 13—January 11, 1896; preceding *The New Boy* after the withdrawal of *Poor Mr. Potton*.

which now precedes *Poor Mr. Potton* at the Vaudeville, is a well-conceived, neatly-written little piece, though the dialogue is perhaps somewhat lacking in dramatic fibre. It ought to have been better played, and especially better stage-managed. One of the lines struck me as really memorable. "He has no talent!" says Will Gordon of Merrifield, the famous architect. "Ah," replies "Merrifield's Ghost" sadly, "he has a great talent for doing without talent!" There is plenty of that talent abroad in the world.

L.

"THE DIVIDED WAY."

27th November.

THE critics who saw promise in *Bogey* were evidently right—I am not quite sure whether I was one of them. Mr. H. V. Esmond is a born playwright, and a man to be reckoned with. *The Divided Way** appears fitly on the boards of the St. James's Theatre, which for the past fifteen years (by what we thoughtlessly term a coincidence, though the reasons for it stare us in the face) has been the nursery and forcing-house of the modern English drama. The only "coincidence" in the matter is that Messrs. Hare

* November 23—December 14.

and Kendal, who had the luck and the discernment to take Mr. Pinero by the hand at the outset of his career, should have been followed by Mr. George Alexander, who is by far the most courageous and progressive of our younger managers. I am not at all sure that Mr. Alexander did better service in giving us *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* than in producing *The Divided Way*. Of course there is no comparison between the two pieces. *Bogey* and *The Divided Way* are Mr. Esmond's *Money-Spinner* and *Squire*; his *Mrs. Tanqueray* is yet to come, and we must not be in too great a hurry for it. But, after all, in producing *Mrs. Tanqueray* Mr. Alexander was only giving loyal and able support to an acknowledged master of the stage. It was a good thing to do, and we are not ungrateful; but it is a still better thing to give an untried man his first chance (for *The Divided Way* was announced before the production of *Bogey*), and to back your opinion of his talent as emphatically as though he brought with him the prestige of a score of successes. If *Mrs. Tanqueray* had failed, Mr. Pinero would have had to bear the brunt of the disaster; the experiment would in any case have been a feather in Mr. Alexander's cap. But the failure of *The Divided Way* would have fallen equally upon manager and author; so that in producing the play Mr. Alexander was running a great risk for a smaller (immediate) reward. His insight and enterprise have

once more justified themselves; and this I say without the least concern as to the state of the booking-sheet. The play ought to be a financial success, and I trust it will be; but the credit due to Mr. Alexander in no way depends upon the length of its run. He has done the right thing in producing it, and confirmed his position as the manager whose career we all watch with the keenest and most sympathetic interest and expectancy.

There are immaturities of conception and crudities of style in *The Divided Way*—things which one imagines Mr. Esmond looking back upon ten years hence, and wondering, "How *could* I write that!" But there are also things, not a few, on which he may look back and say, "By Jove, that was plucky for a beginner—and it was right, too! I was on the spot that time!" He has gone straight to a simple, tragic theme, and he has created a man and woman with blood in their bodies and will in their brains. They are not representatives of ideas or classes, still less are they puppets acting out a preconceived intrigue. There are times when they seem even to break away from the author's control, to assume an independent life, and to speak and act from individual instinct and volition. In other words, Mr. Esmond has a rare gift of character-projection, of detaching his creations from himself. In analysis he is as yet weak, or rather his bent is not as yet in that direction.

His play will, no doubt, be sneered at as sentimental, because, without criticism, irony, or hesitancy of any sort, he accepts passion as the central fact and force of life. For my part, I welcome a return to that antique point of view, and I rejoice in the youthful sincerity which prevents Mr. Esmond from posing as a disillusioned man of the world. His play is really a renaissance tragedy in modern dress. Middleton or Heywood might have treated the subject essentially in the same spirit. Of modern masters, Mr. Esmond takes after Echegaray rather than Ibsen. Not that he imitates the Spanish playwright; indeed, there is nothing to show that he has ever read a line of him; I merely mean that the mainspring of his art is will, not conscience, impulse, not reflection. And the conjuncture he has chosen is tragic in the fullest sense of the word, since, *for these people*, there is no way out of it with honour and with life. Lois is certainly the reverse of an admirable character; she is what the French call an "instinctive," for whom the terms "right" and "wrong" have no meaning; but we feel that the instinct which renders the old life impossible to her, which makes her shrink with loathing from the hypocrisy of love, is anything but a base one. She is reckless and ruthless, but she is not ignoble; and the one point where she becomes ignoble—where she takes the vulgarest means to wheedle a secret, and an inessential one to boot,

out of her husband—is, I think, the chief of Mr. Esmond's mistakes. Things as they are, then, are impossible, and rightly impossible, to the "instinctive" Lois; while to the idealist Gaunt a happiness founded on the misery of others is more impossible still. In the clash of these two impulses, the egoistic and the social or altruistic, we have the primal and eternal tragedy. Why Mr. Esmond should have chosen such a title as *The Divided Way* I cannot conjecture. The beauty of the theme, to my mind, is that there is no division, no choice, of ways. *The Blind Alley* would have been a less romantic title, but more appropriate. These three people are indeed in a blind alley, hemmed in between character on this side and circumstance on that; and little by little the pathway narrows, till it suddenly ends in a grave.

Let us now run rapidly through the play, and try to distinguish its stronger from its weaker elements. The influence of Dickens, so marked in *Bogey*, reappears at the very outset in the names of the characters. "General Humeden," "Gaunt Humeden," "Jay Grist"—they are not precisely Dickens names, but they are chosen with a Dickensish strain after singularity. Dickensish, too, is much of the comic relief (which is flagrantly unrelated to the action), as well as the external and Christmassy picturesqueness of the scenic effects. Peculiarly and irritatingly Dickensish is the character of Mr. Swendal,

a first-cousin of Miss Mowcher and other grotesques. But these are foibles which Mr. Esmond will outgrow, as Mr. Pinero has outgrown them in serious work. Here and there in the dialogue (but not very often) we find touches of that metaphor-hunting which used to be Mr. Pinero's besetting sin, and is still Mr. Carton's. For instance, there is a passage at the beginning of the second act where Gaunt and Lois play battledore and shuttlecock, through a whole series of speeches, with a metaphor about the Children in the Wood—not a very good one to begin with. Moreover, there are one or two lapses into conventional sentimentality, especially in the last act; but the serious scenes as a whole are marked by a sobriety, and even distinction, of style which is of good omen for Mr. Esmond's future.

Just at the beginning, there is an unnecessary artificiality of exposition; but that once over, the story is skilfully told. We are a little taken aback at first when Lois selects her father-in-law as the confidant of her passion. But here Mr. Esmond is rightly daring. This unflinching openness belongs to, and partly redeems, her character. The manner of Jay Grist's arrival in the first act is conventional enough, but the scene in which he blurts out his friend's secret is ingenious, dramatic, masterly. For a moment we think, "Why doesn't she stop him?" and then realise with a little thrill that this is what

her soul is thirsting for, and that she would not stop him for worlds. Strong and original, though perhaps unnecessarily crude, is the scene between Gaunt and Lois in the second act; and, but for one slip of the tongue, as it were, Gaunt's outburst of irrepressible joy in confessing their love, even to his father, would be the finest thing in the play. It was just beginning to grip and move me deeply when one luckless little word suddenly struck me cold again. "My bonny girl! my bonny girl!" cried Gaunt; and the word "bonny" seemed to my ear an intolerably false note. The second half of the second act is distinctly the weakest part of the play. Gaunt's hypothetical appeal to his brother is conventional, improbable, and exceedingly dangerous; and the wheedling scene between Lois and Jack is not only out of character, but insufficiently motivated. The third act suffers from a curious redundancy of dialogue. Gaunt and Lois keep repeating, "I am going alone," "I am coming with you," until we wonder whether the antiphony is to be continued for ever, like a recurring decimal. But when once they shake off this spell, the scene becomes nobly and profoundly tragic. The process of emotion is absolutely convincing in its seeming inconsequence, and there is insight as well as originality in the conception of the woman who has not the courage to accept death deliberately along with her lover, yet can snatch at it alone, five minutes

afterwards, to escape the "forgiveness" of her husband. Mr. Esmond has given Lois two unpretending little speeches of exquisite beauty and fitness. "I was afraid," she says, "just like a common woman;" and when Gaunt cries, "Don't you see that I am dying in order to escape from you?" she answers, "Oh! that sounds cruel, but it isn't." This is dramatic poetry—not quotations from Tennyson or rhapsodies about the stars.

Mr. Alexander plays Gaunt with sincerity and force, and Miss Millard, who looks the part of Lois to admiration, acts it conventionally, but not ineffectively. It is rather odd that Mr. Esmond, an actor himself, should have turned out two such ludicrously "bad parts" as General Humeden and his younger son. The General scarcely gets a word in edgewise; he has nothing to do but to look shocked, and that Mr. Vernon does with dignity and discretion. As for Jack, the balance of the play certainly loses by his being an utter nonentity; and, in any case, one sees no reason why such a thoroughly uncongenial part should have been assigned to Mr. Allan Aynesworth. Mr. Vincent was good as Dr. Macgrath, and Miss Violet Lyster played Phyllis brightly enough, but rather inaudibly at times. Mr. Herbert Waring was excellent, and indeed invaluable, in the part of Jay Grist. His periodical appearances and disappearances in the last act are technically indefensible, and might

have proved dangerous in the hands of a less skilful actor.

LI.

"THE MANXMAN"—"THE MISOGYNIST"—"AN
OLD GARDEN."

4th December.

THE playbill does not tell us who is responsible for the adaptation of *The Manxman*,* produced at the Shaftesbury Theatre; but from Mr. Lewis Waller's speech at the close, it would seem that this version, as well as the earlier version which I saw on its first night at Leeds, is the work of Mr. Wilson Barrett. Be this as it may, the second state of the play is worse than the first, and for a very apparent reason. Pete was the central figure of the country version, for Mr. Barrett himself played Pete; in town, Mr. Lewis Waller plays Philip, who is accordingly thrust into the leading place. Now, for theatrical purposes, Pete is and must be the protagonist. If you are to have a Pete at all, he must take the centre of the stage. He is a ready-made character, appealing to ready-made idealisms; and those whose chief pleasure in the theatre lies in the indulgence of idealistic sympathy are merely bored by complexities of motive and

* November 18—November 30.

ethical half-tints. On the other hand, those who are capable of taking an interest in the self-torturing irresolution of a man like Philip regard the magnanimous mariner as a childish personage, belonging to the infancy of dramatic art. Thus the play in its present form falls between two stools. In the country version it was a sound and simple domestic drama, rising above the level of *Princess's* and *Adelphi* melodrama only in so far as its action was carried on without the aid of coincidences, physical accidents, or even deliberate villainy. In the town version a lame attempt is made to intrude a psychological study into the domestic drama. The author robs Pete to enrich Philip, and dissatisfies one section of the public without satisfying any other. The interest cannot be evenly divided between two such personages. If Philip is to be the centre of the composition, like Arthur Dimmesdale in *The Scarlet Letter*, then Pete must be painted out of the picture and designed afresh. As it is, this crudely, aggressively sympathetic figure, for ever thumping the big drum before the booth of sentiment, fascinates and absorbs those whom it does not bore and annoy. If we give him an inch of space, he inevitably takes an ell. The attempt to transfer the interest to Philip simply displaces the centre of gravity and makes the play heel over like a ship when its cargo has shifted.

This would hold good even if the author had been

successful in portraying the soul-struggles of Philip. As a matter of fact, the methods of melodrama prove hopelessly inapplicable to analytic purposes. Philip is no clearer or more interesting in this play than in the former one; to expand a part is not always to illuminate a character. Moreover, the greater prominence given to Manx customs and ceremonials in the new version only heightens its unreality. Worst of all, the adapter has apparently conceived the luckless idea of trying to make Philip sympathetic at the expense of Kate, with the result that the first act, in Sulby Glen, becomes an outrageously and incredibly vulgar seduction-scene, in which the woman is the wooer. So far from rendering Philip sympathetic, it makes him ridiculous and contemptible. We feel that a man with any sense of decency would have turned away in pitying disgust from this hysterical hoyden. Miss Florence West, let me hasten to say, was in nowise to blame. She simply acted the part set down for her, neither refining nor vulgarising it. She could not escape from the plain words put in her mouth; for instance, this soliloquy: "Oh, I must keep him—even if I——! (*Covers her face with her hands. Presently she looks up again.*) And yet, why not? He would never leave me then!—Oh, I must find Philip!"—and she does. I am not quite certain of the first phrase, "I must keep him"; it was to that effect, but the words may have been

different; the rest of the speech I took down, word for word, at the moment.

Miss West was rather overweighted in Kate's later scenes; Mr. Lewis Waller did all that could be done with the essentially ungrateful part of Philip; Mr. G. W. Cockburn made an excellent Pete; Mr. Fernandez was effective as usual in the part of Cæsar Cregeen; and Miss Kate Phillips played Nancy very brightly.

The St. James's Theatre has been, as I said last week, the nursery of the modern drama; but it is not to the nursery of the drama that one looks for the drama of the nursery. There is really no other term for *The Misogynist*,* by Mr. G. W. Godfrey, which ushers in *The Divided Way*. Here and there a happy turn of dialogue reminds us that Mr. Godfrey is capable of better things; but otherwise the play is feeble and conventional beyond expression. From the moment Mr. Corquodale, the old woman-hater, looked at his nephew's wife, and mumbled to himself that there was something strangely familiar in her face, was there a soul in the audience who did not know exactly what was coming? We knew that the woman-hater had been jilted in his youth; we knew that the lady had married a rich man, without vouchsafing any explanation; we knew that the nephew's wife was her daughter. Nay, more—we knew exactly why the

* November 23—December 14.

faithless fair had thrown Corquodale over: it could only be to save her father from ruin and disgrace, by marrying the man whose name he had forged, or who held the mortgages on his ancestral estate. On the other hand, we did not know—we now can never learn—why she did not explain this to her disconsolate lover. Most of the novelists and playwrights who have told the story have represented that she thought he would feel her desertion less if he were left to despise her as a heartless and mercenary minx; but Mr. Godfrey (and this is his sole originality) does not even condescend to this explanation. For the rest, he sticks to the orthodox lines of the story without the smallest variation. I could see the conductor of the orchestra waiting eagerly for the word "mother"—the cue for the slow music—and I was, oh! so thankful when it came, bringing with it the winding-up of the foolish and frowsy old anecdote. Nor did the acting redeem it. Mr. Alexander's notion of senility is founded, not on Nature, but on Sir Henry Irving, whose method of depicting old age he reproduced (no doubt unconsciously) with a faithfulness that would have done credit to a professional mimic. I have never seen a more curious example of the way in which Sir Henry Irving's personality imposes itself on all who pass through his school. Mr. Allan Aynesworth and Miss Ellis Jeffreys, as the nephew and niece, played their trivial parts pleasantly enough;

and Mr. Vincent, made up like the late Ernest Renan, was conventionally clever as the indispensable old servant.

Compared with Mr. Godfrey's musty sentimentalism, *An Old Garden*,* by Mr. Hill Davies, which now precedes *Miss Brown* at Terry's Theatre, seems positively fresh and original. It is, indeed, an agreeable trifle, not particularly novel either in subject or treatment, yet by no means such a foregone futility as *The Misogynist*. The theme is essentially that of Mr. Gilbert's *Sweethearts*, but it is handled in a totally different fashion. If Mr. Hill Davies intends to follow up this first little success in dramatic authorship, he ought to beware of the soliloquy, a clumsy and outworn device, and especially of the overheard soliloquy, which is totally indefensible. Miss Mona Oram, who plays the heroine, has a pleasant appearance and manner, and shows a good deal of quiet intelligence.

LII.

"THE COMEDY OF ERRORS."

WE have to thank the Benchers of Gray's Inn and the Elizabethan Stage Society (not forgetting Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch) for a very interesting and pleasant

* November 12—February 8, 1896.

evening. There are two extant buildings in London in which we know that plays of Shakespeare's were acted during his lifetime. On Innocents' Day, December 28th, 1594, as we learn from the *Gesta Grayorum*, "a Comedy of Errors, like to Plautus his Menechmus, was played by the players" in Gray's Inn Hall, which was even then a quarter of a century old. It is believed (but this is only a probable conjecture) that the players were the Lord Chamberlain's Company, to which Shakespeare belonged. What is certain is that the Lord Chamberlain's men had on that very day performed before Queen Elizabeth at Greenwich; so we may, if we please, imagine Shakespeare and his fellows acting *The Comedy of Errors* after the Queen's midday dinner, and then coming up to town (they would have ample time, for the Christmas revellers kept late hours) to repeat the same piece at Gray's Inn. The second of the two buildings is the still nobler hall of the Middle Temple (pardon the patriotism of a truant but not unmindful Templar), where a nobler comedy, *Twelfth Night* to wit, was performed on February 2nd, 1602. Manningham, whose diary records the fact, mentions the resemblance between this play and "the Commedy of Errores;" whence we may conjecture that it was the popularity of the earlier and cruder play that induced Shakespeare to rehandle the theme in this glorified form. Some years ago Miss Elizabeth

Robins and Miss Marion Lea were anxious to reproduce *Twelfth Night*, after the fashion of the Elizabethan stage, in the Middle Temple Hall; but the consent of the authorities could not be obtained. The Benchers of Gray's Inn have shown a more liberal and artistic spirit in acceding to the request of the Elizabethan Stage Society, and the event of Saturday night ought to be set down to their credit in a modern *Gesta Grayorum*. The E.S.S., it is true, had allowed the tercentenary of the recorded performance to pass, by nearly a year; but why should we be slaves to anniversaries? Had they determined to wait for the fourth centenary, I fear some of us would have missed a curious and memorable experience. Regarded in the dry light of reason, indeed, such a performance seems a pathetically impotent protest against the ineluctable tyranny of Time. In vain we repeated to ourselves that these very rafters and that very screen had probably echoed the very voice of Shakespeare, speaking some of the words we were now listening to (one fancies he would play either the Duke or Ægeon). The effort to realise this fact, not only intellectually but imaginatively, seemed to make the past more phantasmal, more irrecoverable, than ever. It is a self-defeating sentiment that leads us to linger around inanimate objects which have merely stood in casual propinquity to the great spirits that are gone—which have

neither impressed them nor received from them any abiding impression. Stratford made Shakespeare, Scott made Abbotsford. The Warwickshire town, in its soft Midland landscape, was an essential factor in the poet's psychology, while the pseudo-baronial mansion by the Tweed is an expression of the romancer's spirit, a melancholy monument of its greatness and its weakness. But Gray's Inn Hall did nothing for Shakespeare, received nothing from him. The permanence of its wood and stone, so far from really bringing us nearer to him, serves rather as a sardonic memento of the evanescence of humanity. Some one has preserved a window-pane from Carlyle's Edinburgh lodging, and the relic, duly attested, is offered to the reverence of hero-worshippers. Suppose it true that Carlyle did once breathe upon it—can it do more than remind us that he has vanished like that breath-mist? Not less transient and fugitive was Shakespeare's connection with Gray's Inn Hall; and the attempt to replace his figure against that background merely tantalises the imagination. No vibration of his voice lingers in unremembering joist or wainscot. These mute survivors merely tell us that he is dead. We have to send our imagination abroad through the English-speaking, or rather the Teutonic, world, from the crowded theatres of unnumbered cities to the miner's hut and the frontier-man's cabin, before we can give their stolid sophistry

the lie, and tell them that he lives, and will live when they have mouldered to dust.

But the Hall undoubtedly serves the purpose of the Elizabethan Stage Society in helping us to realise the conditions of a sixteenth-century representation. And, as good luck will have it, *The Comedy of Errors** is of all Shakespeare's works that which loses least and gains most in modern eyes by absence of scenery and conventionality of costume. The play is a classical farce recklessly romanticised; but it preserves so much of its classic character that the scene remains indefinite—simply "Ephesus: a public place." Then, again, the plot is so unblushingly extravagant that anything like illusion is from the outset impossible. To attempt it could only be to force upon us the consciousness of disillusion. The intrigue is a sort of dramatic diagram, an essay in the pure mathematics of situation. The poet seems to say, "Admitting such-and-such inadmissible postulates, let us work out the resultant series of impossible possibilities." Plautus is content with one pair of twins, and takes the trouble to explain at some length how the two Menæchmi came to be called by the same name. Shakespeare gives us the square of the coincidence, so to speak, by attaching indistinguishable slaves to the indistinguishable masters, and airily omits to explain why both masters are called

* Performed three times—December 6, 7, and 9.

Antipholus and both lackeys Dromio. Observe that we have here no real analogy with the case of the *Amphitruo*, in which Jupiter and Mercury miraculously assume the forms, and deliberately take the names, of Amphitryon and Sosia. There is all the difference in the world between a miracle and a coincidence. Then Shakespeare piles coincidence upon coincidence in the arrival of the father (who replaces the Prologue of the Latin comedy) and the recognition of the mother—a singularly frigid invention, and quite ineffective because quite unprepared. Thus the whole fable is so remote from even imaginable reality that we willingly dispense with all realism of presentation, and regard the stage as a sort of chess-board on which pieces and pawns (and the pieces, as in chess, are mostly in pairs) work out a certain problem in a given number of moves. If all Shakespeare's works were like *The Comedy of Errors*, I should willingly assent to the doctrine of the E.S.S. that we ought to get rid of scenic apparatus and revert to the bare platform of the Globe or the Blackfriars. Unfortunately for the E.S.S., but fortunately for the world at large, *The Comedy of Errors* stands alone in the abstractness, if I may call it so of its scene and matter.

Far be it from me, however, to throw cold water on the enthusiasm of the E.S.S. Though I cannot accept their principle as applied to Shakespearian

productions at large, I heartily approve their practice, and hope that they will continue their interesting revivals of the more neglected plays. The costuming of *The Comedy of Errors* was excellent and really instructive, and the acting was, for amateurs, most creditable. One of the Dromios (I quite forget which) was a real comedian. It interested me to note that whereas I had always conceived it next door to impossible to find or make two pairs of actors even passably alike, as a matter of fact the two Antipholuses and the two Dromios were to me, at no great distance from the scene, actually indistinguishable. Of course, I was vaguely conscious of certain differences between them; but it would have needed a special effort of attention (from which I carefully abstained) to fix the differences in my mind so as to enable me to tell, when one of them entered, whether he was of Ephesus or of Syracuse. I was effectually enveloped in the "general mist of error." To this end the broad brims of the Antipholuses' hats contributed most ingeniously. The stage management might have been better—in the opening scene it was quite ridiculous—and it is hard to see why the E.S.S. should deliberately desert its strongest position in making huge and quite unnecessary cuts in the last act. On the whole, then, I remain unconverted to the general theory that scenery and accurate costume are hindrances to the proper enjoyment of Shake-

speare, and that amateurs act better than actors. Strictly speaking, the comedy was not acted at all, but only more or less intelligently recited. But the effect was so picturesque and interesting that I beg to repeat in earnest a proposal which was freely mooted in jest—to wit, that the picture should be completed by the audience, too, appearing in ruffs and farthingales. The black coats and white neckties were deplorably discordant. If the Benchers of Gray's Inn should be minded to give another gaudy-night of the kind, I do not see why they should not write *Elizabethan Costume* on the cards of invitation. I am not much of a masquerader myself—"parcus ludorum cultor et infrequens"—but for such a solemnity I would don doublet and hose as cheerfully as that redoubtable brigand, Mr. Tupman, squeezed himself into his green velvet jacket with a two-inch tail.

An ingenious and humorous comedietta by Mr. W. D. Howells now precedes *Mrs. Ponderbury's Past* at the Avenue. It is entitled *A Dangerous Ruffian*,* and deals with the exploit of an absent-minded professor who knocks down and robs an inoffensive old gentleman, under the impression that he is recovering his watch from a daring pickpocket. The principal character, however, is not the Professor, but his hysterically adoring spouse, who is cleverly played by Miss Florence Harrington.

* November 30—January 2, 1896.

LIII.

“THE GREATEST OF THESE—” — “MADAME” —
“KITTY CLIVE.”

18th December.

AT Brighton on Saturday last, I had the pleasure of seeing Mr. and Mrs. Kendal in a four-act play by Mr. Sydney Grundy entitled *The Greatest of These—* (please observe that the dash is an essential part of the title). The Kendals are doing good service in taking round the country so serious and so humane a piece of work. It is worth a mint of *Queen's Shillings* and a snowstorm of *Scraps of Paper*. Sooner or later it is certain to be seen in town, and it will be time enough then to consider it in detail. Meanwhile, let me simply say that the character of Mr. Armitage, J.P., is to my mind the strongest thing Mr. Grundy has ever done. No more vigorous and penetrating study of the honest, well-meaning, “liberal” and yet destructive Pharisee has been seen on our stage. I am sure Mr. Grundy will not think that I am impugning his originality if I call Mr. Armitage the English variant of Ibsen's Consul Bernick. The resemblance has very likely never occurred to him, but it exists none the less, not only in the general conception of the character, but even in details. For instance,

Armitage's belief in the superior virtue and intelligence of the provinces, as compared with London, is an exact parallel to Bernick's belief in Norway's moral exaltation over the "great communities"; and when Mrs. Armitage says to him in the last act, "You have never known your son, and he has not known you. . . . You haven't lost but found him," she is using almost the very words applied in the last act of *The Pillars of Society* to the relation between Bernick and Olaf. I regret to add that Armitage's conversion is almost—not quite—as sudden as Bernick's. The title sufficiently indicates the bent of the piece. It is a strong and even a daring attack upon the inhuman egoism of respectability—an attack so forcible in its outspokenness that it fairly carried the sympathies even of a chilly afternoon audience. It well deserved the applause which greeted it; and yet (now for the inevitable grumble!) I think it would be a better play if Mr. Grundy, like a good fairy, would or could grant me three wishes. I wish in the first place that he could have got on without the forgery business; it is conventional and far from convincing. In the second place, I could wish for a little more clearness of definition in his theology or metaphysics. He uses "God" and "Nature" as practically interchangeable terms, which I take to be begging the question. The very point on which Mr. and Mrs. Armitage differ is how far the dictates of God coincide with those of

Nature. Thirdly, and most especially, I wish his characters were a little less rhetorical in their methods of expression. One and all, they "talk like a book," though in Laurence's case the book happens to be a slang dictionary. Mrs. Armitage in particular rejoices in a quite Ciceronian gift of antithesis, and employs all the elisions and inversions of the accomplished orator. For instance, "Your children, your respectability, your position—I was forgiven for these!" And again, "Can I make myself a new being, with a new heart in my body and a new brain in my head? Morality says Yes; Religion, Yes; but Nature—NO!" And yet again, "I might urge some frail words, not in my own excuse—words I have never spoken, words I do not wish to speak." In real life people do not "urge" words at all; that only occurs in provincial leading articles; and it is mere affectation of Mrs. Armitage to call her words "frail"—they are from first to last singularly robust. In one or two places she even drops into poetry:

"Where are the brave ideals of old days?

Where are the dreams that once we dreamed together?"

I declare these lines have such a swing about them that it is quite a disappointment to the ear when she omits to complete the stanza, somewhat in this fashion:

"Why do those brows, that should be wreathed with bays,
Show, in their stead, the recreant white feather?"

And Mr. Armitage is not much behind his wife in his command of the graces of style. It is distinctly unusual to hear a provincial banker speak of "Laurence, to whom all forms of sin and evil are as unreal as the phantoms of mythology;" and it is nothing less than amazing to find this worthy chapel-goer steeped to the lips in Tennyson, quoting him to his pastor as though the *Idylls* were Holy Writ, and bursting out, when he realises his own Pharisaism, "*I am the curse, not Lancelot nor another!*" I beg Mr. Grundy to believe that I recognise and value the vigour and eloquence of his dialogue in the chief scenes of this play; but oratorical eloquence is one thing, dramatic eloquence another, and I cannot but think that he is apt to overlook the distinction.

Miss Farren's management at the Opera Comique takes us back to the palmy days of the Gaiety. Mr. James T. Tanner's three-act "absurdity," *Madame*,* is just such a piece as Mr. Hollingshead might have selected to "play the people in" to a popular burlesque. It is like a nightmare brought on by a surfeit of French farces; but it is tolerably inoffensive, and people are found to laugh at it. That capital comedian Mr. Eric Lewis manages to be fairly amusing in the part of Mr. Galleon. At the Royalty, the hundredth night of *The Chili Widow* was celebrated by the production of a one-act play by Mr. Frankfort

* December 7—February 1, 1896.

Moore entitled *Kitty Clive*.^{*} It is like a score of other plays in which some legendary actor or actress is made to give a taste of his or her quality in private life; and it differs from its predecessors chiefly in its total lack of ingenuity or plausibility. However, it affords Miss Irene Vanbrugh an opportunity for some agreeable high-jinks which seemed to entertain the audience. There was one thrilling moment when Miss Vanbrugh-Clive undertook to show us how Garrick, as Hamlet, delivered the address to the Ghost. Unfortunately she broke off after the first line, and left me simply gasping with disappointment.

LIV.

"ONE OF THE BEST."

25th December.

WHEN it has been stated that *One of the Best* † at the Adelphi is a good and effective play of its kind—certainly one of the best of recent years—there remains very little to be said of it. The ability displayed by Messrs. Seymour Hicks and George Edwardes is of the purely spectacular and stage-managerial kind, not in the least dramatic. There

* December 11—still running.

† December 21—still running.

is little or no invention in the play. The skill of the authors lies in seizing upon a picturesque and impressive incident—the degradation of Captain Dreyfus—and forcing it, not without violence, into an English setting. In doing so they shrink from no extreme of physical or moral improbability. The English Dreyfus must, of course, be innocent of the treachery attributed to him, so he has to be provided with a double, and we are asked to assume a strong personal resemblance between Mr. Terriss (the hero) and Mr. Abingdon (the villain). This is a pretty steep assumption to begin with. Then, that the villain may gain access to the safe in which the War Office plans are deposited, the daughter of the officer entrusted with their charge has to be represented as a most abandoned and repulsive criminal. Poor Miss Millward ! never was a more hateful part assigned to an Adelphi heroine. The authors' efforts to keep Esther Coventry within the pale of sympathy only made her more intolerable. We should have liked her better as an out-and-out villainess. She cannot possibly be deceived by her villain-lover's representation that his object in stealing the plans is only (!) to swindle the Government out of £5000. Unless she is a mere idiot, she must know that she is betraying not only her father, but her country. Then in order to screen her lover, she perjures herself through thick and thin, and suffers an innocent man

who has done her no harm to be subjected to an infamous punishment and condemned to penal servitude for life. And finally, there being no one else left to betray, she turns round and betrays her lover, not out of remorse or any sort of compunction, but simply because he declines to marry her. I must say the hero's magnanimity in imploring her father (and the audience) to pardon her seems to me misplaced. She ought to be handed over to Professor Lombroso to adorn his gallery of female delinquents. A character of more unredeemed turpitude has never been presented to the execrations of a British gallery. Yet such is Miss Millward's empire over the affections of the Adelphi gods that they positively applaud her! This Esther Coventry is the pivot of the whole action, and in designing her the authors have simplified their task with a happy audacity, on which I beg to congratulate them. The scene of the robbery is a stirring piece of melodrama, and the court-martial is fairly effective, though it would be much more so if Lieutenant Keppel made some slight attempt to defend himself, instead of indulging in mere futile protestation and declamation. But the great attractions of the play are of course the scenes representing the hero's degradation and reinstatement, the best-regulated pieces of military spectacle I remember to have seen on the stage. The degradation was really moving after its fashion, and it seemed to me that

Mr. Terriss here attained a genuine dignity and sincerity of emotional expression, not always to be found in his acting.

Mr. Abingdon, as the villain, had a more than usually ungrateful part, and I must protest against the cowardly brutality with which the mob of soldiers and rustics is suffered to treat him at the close. Such outbreaks of bestial ferocity do, indeed, occur, but that is no reason why they should be presented with approbation on the stage. When the benevolent clergyman appeared on the scene, I did not doubt that he was going to rescue the defenceless and cowering wretch of a villain, and put to shame the dastardly crew who were torturing him. But not a bit of it! After a feeble protest, he left them to their savage sport; and no doubt the gods went away full of admiration for this mob of sturdy Britons, and prepared to imitate them on the first opportunity. Mr. L. Delorme and Mr. Athol Forde played two minor characters very cleverly, the one a French spy, the other an octogenarian rustic. Mr. Harry Nicholls was exceedingly droll as a Highlander from Hampstead (he said Hampshire, but that must have been a slip of the tongue), and Miss Vane Featherston, as the comic maidservant, played up to him very brightly. By the way, Mr. Nicholls's allusion to some supposed jealousy between the Commander-in-Chief and another distinguished General (both mentioned by name)

struck me as being in execrable taste ; but since the sagacious Mr. Redford sanctions it, I suppose it is little short of high treason to say so. It seems to me that the one conceivable utility of a censorship would be to check silly and offensive personalities of this sort. The speech may very probably be a "gag"; but whether Mr. Redford did, or did not, pass it, the fact remains that our beneficent censorship failed to prevent its being spoken on the stage. Were it not that Mr. Redford is supposed to relieve us of all responsibility in these matters, the slight hiss which greeted it would doubtless have been much more emphatic. Hence the popularity of the censorship with low-comedians, on whom it places no check, while it protects them against the censorship of the decent-minded public.

EPILOGUE.

THE Epilogue to 1895 must be one of mingled gratulation and warning. The actual record of the year is highly inspiriting; but a danger seems to loom ahead. It is not a new danger; it has been descried and charted long ago. But the very rapidity of our advance has brought us visibly nearer to it, and we shall presently have to deal with it in earnest.

The condition of the theatre as a whole is distinctly healthier than at any time since the decline of the Patent Houses. In all departments save one the general tendency is upwards. The one exception is the so-called "Legitimate." Sir Henry Irving has done splendid service to his profession, and has amply earned the reward which this year has brought him; but he has not made Shakespeare live as he ought to live on the stage of his native country. Four or five sumptuous revivals in a decade are not enough to keep the art of Shakespearian acting alive. With many of us, it does not survive even as a memory: hence the apparent success of a thoroughly mediocre, and in some parts indescribably feeble, revival of

Romeo and Juliet at the Lyceum. We have also had *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* cruelly mutilated by Mr. Daly, but resuscitated, in some measure, by the cleverness of his company. Except for one or two amateur experiments, this is our whole Shakespearian record;* and for the rest, our Elizabethan, Caroline, and Georgian repertory is represented by—*The Rivals* at the Court Theatre! Such are the short and simple annals of the classic drama. What we want is, in addition to the Lyceum, a theatre like Sadler's Wells during the Phelps period—more modern in its methods, indeed, but conducted in a like artistic spirit.

The "Legitimate" apart, there is progress on every hand. Even spectacular melodrama seems (or is this an illusion?) a shade less imbecile than it used to be. In the department of farce we have at least shaken off the yoke of France. A notably successful adaptation is now exceedingly rare—in the record of 1895 *The Chili Widow* stands alone. The most popular farces of the past three or four years have all been of home manufacture; and though none of them (since Mr. Pinero turned serious) has been of the highest quality,

* It is true, however, that Sir Henry Irving gave a few performances of *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado*, and *Macbeth*, by way of rehearsals for America. Sir Henry's habit of running through his repertory during the summer months is an excellent one, tending as it does to break through the exclusive dominance of the long run.

we have quite a little group of writers who are developing a pretty knack of touching off the humorous aspects of life. Upon the "musical comedy" of the *In Town*, *Shop Girl*, *Gentleman Joe*, and *Artist's Model* type, which is swamping our lighter theatres, it is impossible to look with much complacency; but it may at least be said that there are excellent possibilities in the form, and that even the tawdry and vulgar medleys we now see are greatly preferable to the brazen burlesques which they have supplanted. Who would willingly go back to the time when a popular manager loved to advertise himself as a "dealer in legs," when pink-limbed priestesses of the "sacred lamp" used to gabble screeds of halting doggerel, crammed with puns which they did not understand, and when not even the most beautiful and sacred theme in mythology, history, or poetry was safe from the debasing clutch of the graceless and illiterate parodist? The "musical comedy" of to-day has at least the negative merit of not being a hideous leprosy on the fair face of literature.

It is, however, in the sphere of social comedy or drama that the advance is most palpable. Even now one speaks of the "dramatic revival," not with assured faith, but rather with a tremulous hope. It is so difficult to attain a true perspective in matters of art, and especially in matters theatrical. So many "dramatic revivals" have fizzed, sputtered, flared, and

gone out like Roman candles, leaving only unsightly and unsavoury exuviæ behind them. *Virgilius*, in the eighteen-twenties, heralded a dramatic revival; so did *The Lady of Lyons* in the late 'thirties; and behold! they both stink in the nostrils of to-day. More real, perhaps, was the revival marked by *Society* and *Caste*; yet it too died away, and we had to fall back upon imported *Diplomacies* and *Pink Dominoes*. Such experiences may well render us wary of hallooing before we are out of the wood. But the present movement appears to me to differ from these others in that it is (with all respect to Mr. Henry Arthur Jones) a "nascence" rather than a "renascence." It gives us a form of drama which we have never had before.

Robertsonian comedy was only the old comedy of manners in a new guise—the comedy of no-manners it was wittily called. It offered no criticism of life or of social institutions, beyond an assertion of the excellent but somewhat superficial maxim that fond hearts are more than coronets and simple faith than Norman blood. In the later works of Mr. Pinero, on the other hand, we have a drama of ideas, in those of Mr. Henry Arthur Jones—shall we say a melodrama of ideas? All the tedious talk we have heard about "problem plays" and "sex plays" means nothing more than that the drama is at last beginning to seize upon and interpret the genuinely

dramatic aspects of modern life. It is significant that while the Robertsonian comedy was faithful to the age-old formula, and always ended with the marriage of one or two pairs of lovers, the new drama is much more apt to take marriage (if not the Divorce Court) for its starting-point. While the love idyll was the indispensable nucleus of every play, monotony followed close on the heels of each new departure, and anything like a searching psychology was impossible. The dramatist's province has now been extended so as to include every form and phase of the relationship between man and woman; or, in other words, the stage has at last entered into a really intimate and vital relationship to life. That is why—if the movement be left unhampered from without—one looks with some confidence for a steady development of drama, keeping pace with the development of social life and thought. The movement, it is true, is only beginning; and yet, in such a play as *The Benefit of the Doubt*, how incalculable the advance beyond anything we could have dreamed of three years ago! It is far from a faultless, and scarcely an inspiring, piece of work. It does not come scatheless from the very searching ordeal of criticism to which all plays of any ambition are nowadays subjected. But it is to be noted that all who speak of it, whether in attack or defence, treat its leading characters, at least, as real people, having a sort of substantive and independent

existence, such as we instinctively attribute to the creations of the great novelists. How long is it since we could say as much of any group of personages in English drama? And *The Benefit of the Doubt* does not stand alone. Mr. Pinero has given us also *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*; in *The Triumph of the Philistines* Mr. Jones produced a play which, though scarcely successful, was quite in the movement; and *The Divided Way* revealed in Mr. H. V. Esmond a talent which I, for one, shall watch with vivid sympathy and hope. Thus there is no lack of encouragement in the record of the year which shows Mr. Pinero steadily advancing, Mr. Jones at least maintaining his ground, and the younger generation, in the person of Mr. Esmond, knocking resolutely at the door.

Where, then, lies the danger foreshadowed above? Simply in this, that while the drama, as an intellectual product, is rapidly progressing, the theatre, as a practical mechanism for the publication, the giving forth, of plays, remains absolutely stationary. No serious attempt is being made to provide at any single point a loophole of escape from the inauspicious commercial conditions which Mr. George Bernard Shaw expounded so clearly in his introduction to the THEATRICAL WORLD OF 1894. "The theatre," said Mr. Shaw, "depends on a very large public, the drama on a very [I should rather say a comparatively]

small one. . . . Unless a London manager sees some probability of from 50,000 to 75,000 people paying him an average of five shillings a-piece within three months, he will hardly be persuaded to venture [a production]." Moreover, if the demand drops towards the end of the three months and the play has to be taken off, it is regarded as a check for the author and manager, nay, almost a disaster; though a similar result in the case of a novel would be recorded as a monumental triumph. Thus the play which extracts from the pockets of the public such a sum as would amply content Mr. Meredith or Mr. Hardy and their publishers, ranks as a dead and deplorable failure. A play whose aggregate produce would mean brilliant victory for Mr. Crockett or Mr. Ian Maclaren, ranks as little better than a defeat for Mr. Pinero or Mr. Jones. In order to be accepted as an unqualified success, a play must bring in such sums as would buy up half-a-dozen masterpieces by Mr. Hall Caine or Miss Marie Corelli.

Stage-publication is necessarily somewhat more costly than book-publication; but the discrepancy need not be so enormous as it is, or appears to be, at present. While this state of things continues, the drama must remain in subjection to the tastes, if not precisely of the mob, at least of a much larger public than can possibly be expected to give steady support to thoughtful and artistic work.

So long as a play must make immediate appeal to 50,000 people if it is to escape positive failure, to 150,000 if it is to attain distinguished success, the drama is hopelessly condemned to triviality and mediocrity.

What we want is a method of stage-publication which shall reduce by at least one-half the minimum number of purchasers (so to speak) required to make a play an honourable success, and shall afford the chance of an intermediate fortune between utter failure and instant and overwhelming vogue. In short, we must have a mechanism which shall furnish us with a middle term between the "boom" and the "frost." That mechanism can be supplied only by a repertory theatre, where unbroken runs shall be forbidden by the articles of association. And that theatre, though it ought to be a self-supporting and even an interest-paying concern, cannot be founded without a considerable capital (or endowment-fund if you will), so vested as to enable it to establish itself as an art-institution, and form its traditions and its public, before any direct pecuniary return is demanded.

The leaders of the stage must soon, in self-defence, realise the necessity of such a theatre (or theatres); and the necessity once admitted, the possibility will forthwith become equally clear. Men who have once felt the joy of free artistic creation cannot, if they would, fall back again upon mere unrelieved pot-

boiling. There will always be themes, of course, which lend themselves to what may be called long-run treatment, and these they will continue to treat for the actor-managers and their leading ladies. But they will presently recognise, if indeed they do not already, that the finest themes and the subtlest methods appeal to the public of from 25,000 to 50,000, not to the 150,000 multitude. The smaller public is indeed growing, but not nearly so rapidly as our dramatists are advancing in artistic seriousness and competence. Some of them may perhaps hope, by deliberately moderating their rate of advance, to take the multitude forward along with them. I beg them to banish the dream. Life is too short for any such enterprise. The only plan is deliberately to cut loose from the multitude, press on with the few (who are not so *very* few) as fast and as far as our powers permit, and leave the crowd to struggle after as best it may. If our playwrights continue formally to bid, in every effort, for a great popular success, they will either sink back into insignificance (and that they will find no less irksome than humiliating), or else they must look to have their career chequered by the doubtful successes which reactionary paragraphists will make haste to describe and gloat over as failures. A successful appeal to the 25,000 public would mean neither disgrace nor beggary, but fame and a substantial profit. It is only when you cast your nets

for the 150,000, and land a bare fifth of them, that you set the enemy chuckling over your loss of prestige.

I have my doubts even of the financial policy of staking everything upon the first run of a play which has any sort of solid merit in it. In the course of six or eight months, you kill, by exhaustion, the goose that lays the golden eggs. There are many plays, of course, which it would be folly to treat otherwise. If you stumble on a *Trilby*, by all means squeeze it for all it is worth while the "boom" lasts; but I am not at all certain that this is the far-sighted policy in the case of a *Mrs. Tanqueray* or a *Rebellious Susan*. The other day an old friend of mine returned to England after a long sojourn in Vienna, where he had in some degree lost touch of English matters and manners. He called on me the day after the production of *The Benefit of the Doubt*, and, having read some notices of it, asked me to tell him about Mr. Pinero. I took down from my book-case a dozen or so of that writer's plays, and spread them before my querist on the table. "Ah," he said, as he glanced over them, "now which of these ought I to go and see?" I explained that none of them, except *The Benefit of the Doubt*, was then being acted or likely to be soon revived. "What!" he said, "have they all been failures?" I had some difficulty in making him understand that he was no longer in easy-goin

Vienna, which ruminates its dramatic tit-bits, but in feverish, gigantic London, which knows only two methods of dealing with the theatrical viands offered it—to spit them out with contumely, or ravenously to crunch them up—in either case destroying them once for all. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. Revivals do occur; a second and even a third bid is made for the favour of the multitude. But as soon as the multitude ceases to crowd to the pay-boxes, the play ceases to exist. It has no chance of living out its natural life, much less of putting on immortality.

Again, the long-run system forces the playwright to stake everything, practically, upon the hazards of the first night and the first cast. These hazards have always to be faced, but under the present system any misadventure becomes absolutely irretrievable. Look, for instance, at *The Benefit of the Doubt*. It would be absurd to call this play a failure, but its ten weeks' run was much shorter than might have been anticipated. What, then, was the reason? I believe a certain falling-off in the last act had something to do with it; but the main and obvious reason lay in the extreme inadequacy with which three of the principal characters were represented. At a repertory theatre it might not, in this one season, have attained sixty performances; it might perhaps have been played three times a week for five or six weeks; but we

should all have looked forward to seeing it again next season, re-studied, and, we might not unreasonably hope, with the mistakes of the first cast corrected. As it is, we may possibly, and even probably, never have an opportunity of seeing that admirable second act worthily performed in all its parts.

Yet again, the necessity for *immediate* appeal to the multitude crushingly handicaps all untried and inconspicuous authors. Mr. Alexander, for instance, produced Mr. Esmond's very remarkable play *The Divided Way*. Much as I admired it, I could have predicted its financial failure, and I dare say Mr. Alexander himself was not a whit more sanguine. Mr. Esmond, as an author, was unknown to the great public, or known only through the rumour of a previous failure. There was nothing meretricious or sensational in the piece itself, nothing to "set people talking"; and in the cast there was no performer who happened to be in momentary vogue. Therefore the 150,000 stolidly ignored the play, and the 25,000 had no time to find out its existence. At a repertory theatre, it would have been enabled to seek out its affinities and might quite probably have attained an encouraging success.

I believe, then, that interest and ambition will ere long combine to make our leading dramatists cast about for some method of formally repudiating their alleged thralldom to that really non-existent despot

the Average Playgoer. We are actually enslaved, not by a definite external force, but by an error of language, a vicious habit of thought. We persist in talking and thinking of the Public, as though it were a tangible entity, one and indivisible. Nothing could be more misleading: the Public is a myth, or rather an inert and negligible conglomeration of many and diverse publics, some of which have scarcely an idea or a taste in common. There is *a* public for every form of art, except the merely tedious and puerile; but it is not always easy, in an overgrown community, for the artist to get at his public. Who can doubt that there now exists, in this England of ours, a public sufficient to support, and that liberally, the serious modern drama which we have at last shown ourselves capable of producing? All it wants is a rallying-point; and that rallying-point must be provided by the initiative, or at any rate with the active co-operation, of the artists themselves. This is not the place to discuss ways and means, or to consider whether the enfranchisement of the contemporary drama and the rational cultivation of the classics can be brought within the sphere of one enterprise. That would be the ideal arrangement, and I see no reason why it should not be practicable, even if it ultimately involved the command of more than one stage. But the main point is to provide, as aforesaid, a theatre which shall abjure in advance the principle of the long run, and shall

serve as a rallying-point for the intelligent public. This public has neither to be created nor educated; it is ready-made and ready-educated, if only we can appeal to it with spirit and judgment. What is certain is that unless such an appeal can be made, and that shortly, our boasted renaissance is in a parlous predicament. We have reached, or very nearly, the limit of possible progress under existing conditions; and the cessation of advance is the signal for retreat.

SYNOPSIS OF PLAYBILLS, 1895.

BY HENRY GEORGE HIBBERT.

JANUARY.

2. **A HAPPY THOUGHT**: Play in One Act, by H. Tripp Edgar. Revival at the **Strand**. Cast: *John Wentworth*, Mr. H. Tripp Edgar; *Jack*, Mr. Edgar Stevens; *Freddy Woodpeck*, Mr. Dudley Cloraine; *A Stranger*, Mr. Frank Stather; *Kitty Wentworth*, Miss Kate Ruskin.

3. **AN IDEAL HUSBAND**: Play in Three Acts, by Oscar Wilde. **Haymarket**. Cast: *The Earl of Caversham*, Mr. Alfred Bishop; *Lord Goring*, Mr. Charles H. Hawtrey; *Sir Robert Chiltern*, Mr. Lewis Waller; *Vicomte De Nanjac*, Mr. Cosmo Stuart; *Mr. Montford*, Mr. Henry Stanford; *Phipps*, Mr. C. H. Brookfield; *Mason*, Mr. H. Deane; *Footman*, Mr. Charles Meyrick; *Footman*, Mr. Goodhart; *Lady Chiltern*, Miss Julia Neilson; *Lady Markby*, Miss Fanny Brough; *Lady Basilidon*, Miss Vane Featherston; *Mrs. Marchmont*, Miss Helen Forsyth; *Miss Mabel Chiltern*, Miss Maud Millett; *Mrs. Cheveley*, Miss Florence West. Withdrawn 6th April; reproduced at the **Criterion**, 13th April; withdrawn 27th April.

4. **THYRZA FLEMING**: Play in Four Acts, by Dorothy Leighton (Mrs. G. C. Ashton Jonson). **Terry's** (Independent Theatre). Cast: *Colonel Rivers*, Mr. Bernard Gould; *Bertie Earnshaw*, Mr. William Bonney; *John Heron*, Mr. George Warde; *Bobby Falkland*, Mr. Harry Buss; *Jenks*, Mr. Osmond Shillingford; *Waiter*, Mr. George Shepherd;

Pamela Rivers, Miss Winifred Frazer; *Theophila Falkland*, Miss Agnes Hill; *Jones*, Miss A. Beaugarde; *Martin*, Miss Papton; *Chambermaid*, Miss Louise Cove; *Thyrza Fleming*, Miss Esther Palliser.

5. GUY DOMVILLE: Play in Three Acts, by Henry James. **St. James's.** Cast: *Guy Domville*, Mr. George Alexander; *Lord Devenish*, Mr. W. G. Elliott; *Frank Hum-ber*, Mr. Herbert Waring; *George Round*, Mr. H. V. Esmond; *Servant*, Mr. Frank Dyall; *Mrs. Peverel*, Miss Marion Terry; *Mrs. Domville*, Mrs. Edward Saker; *Mary Brasier*, Miss Evelyn Millard; *Fanny*, Miss Irene Vanbrugh; *Milliners*, Miss Blanche Wilmot and Miss Lucy Bertram. Withdrawn 5th February.—Preceded by **TOO HAPPY BY HALF:** A Farce in One Act, by Julian Field. Cast: *Eric Verner*, Mr. H. V. Esmond; *Jack Fortescue*, Mr. Arthur Royston; *James*, Mr. E. Benham; *Maud Verner*, Miss Evelyn Millard.

12. KING ARTHUR: A Play in a Prologue and Four Acts, by J. Comyns Carr. **Lyceum.** Cast: *King Arthur*, Mr. Irving; *Sir Lancelot*, Mr. Forbes Robertson; *Sir Mordred*, Mr. Frank Cooper; *Sir Kay*, Mr. Tyars; *Sir Gawaine*, Mr. Clarence Hague; *Sir Bedevere*, Mr. Fuller Mellish; *Sir Agravaine*, Mr. Lacy; *Sir Percivale*, Mr. Buckley; *Sir Lavaine*, Mr. Julius Knight; *Sir Dagonet*, Mr. Harvey; *Merlin*, Mr. Sydney Valentine; *Messenger*, Mr. Belmore; *Gaoler*, Mr. Tabb; *Morgan Le Fay*, Miss Genevieve Ward; *Elaine*, Miss Lena Ashwell; *Clarissant*, Miss Annie Hughes; *Spirit of the Lake*, Miss Maud Milton; *Guinevere*, Miss Ellen Terry. After 3rd May "King Arthur" began to be performed alternately with other plays.

14 AN INNOCENT ABROAD: Farce in Three Acts, by W. Stokes Craven (first produced in the United Kingdom at the Theatre Royal, Belfast, 9th November 1894). **Terry's.** Cast: *Tobias Pilkington*, Mr. Edward Terry; *Dick*, Mr. Leslie Kenyon; *Jack Summerville*, Mr. Harcourt Beatty; *Dr. Hanson*, Mr. Jack Thompson; *Bill Bouncer*, Mr. Ernest Hendrie; *Dennis*, Mr. George Belmore; *Mr. Knowles*, Mr. Robert Soutar; *Wilber*, Mr. Gerald Mirrielees; *Mrs. Pilkington*.

ton, Miss Kate Mills; *Lily*, Miss Lily Desmond; *Cissy Farnborough*, Miss Mackintosh; *Rose*, Miss Jessie Danvers. Withdrawn 16th March.—Preceded by **KEEP YOUR OWN COUNSEL**: Duologue, by Henry Bellingham and William Best. Cast: *Mr. Pickering*, Mr. Sidney Brough; *Dora*, Miss Madge Mackintosh.—Succeeded by **HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS**: Farce in One Act, by the Rev. James Townley. Cast: *Duke's Servant*, Mr. Edward Terry; *Sir Harry's Servant*, Mr. Ernest Hendrie; *Lady Bab's Maid*, Miss Madge Ray; *Lady Charlotte's Maid*, Miss Madge Mackintosh; *Lovell*, Mr. Sydney Brough; *Freeman*, Mr. Leslie Kenyon; *Philip*, Mr. Jack Thompson; *Tom*, Mr. Robert Soutar; *Kingsbox*, Mr. G. Mirrielees; *Coachman*, Mr. T. Eames; *Cook*, Miss Eily Desmond; *Chloe*, Miss Blanche Astley; *Kitty*, Miss Jessie Danvers.

17. A PAIR OF SPECTACLES: Comedy in Three Acts, adapted from the French by Sydney Grundy; revival at the **Garrick**. Cast: *Mr. Benjamin Goldfinch*, Mr. John Hare; *Uncle Gregory*, Mr. Charles Groves; *Percy*, Mr. Allan Aynsworth; *Dick*, Mr. Gilbert Hare; *Lorimer*, Mr. Charles Rock; *Bartholomew*, Mr. Gerald Du Maurier; *Joyce*, Mr. George Raiemond; *Another Shoemaker*, Mr. Roger Roberts; *Mrs. Goldfinch*, Miss Kate Rorke; *Lucy Lorimer*, Miss Mabel Terry Lewis; *Charlotte*, Miss Lilian Lee. Withdrawn 2nd March.—Preceded by **FADED FLOWERS**: Play in One Act, by Arthur A'Beckett. Cast: *Harold Beresford*, Mr. Arthur Bouchier; *Robert Elton*, Mr. Scott Buist; *Bobbie*, Master Horace Terry; *Ada*, Miss Violet Vanbrugh.

19. THE TABOO: Fantastic Opera in Two Acts, Libretto by Mason Carnes, Music by Ethel Harraden (first produced at Leamington, 22nd May 1894). **Trafalgar**. Cast: *Papakaio*, Mr. Harry Paulton; *Timaru*, Mr. Wilfred Howard; *Ranoro*, Mr. Kelson Truman; *Bigmoko*, Mr. George Humphry; *Septimus Octopus Sharp*, Mr. Wyatt; *Whangahia*, Miss Helena Dalton; *Wangathaia*, Miss Maud Maude; *Whangayonda*, Miss Bertha Meyers; *Wattatauka*, Madam Amadi; *Orama*, Miss Lettie Searle; *Pateena*, Miss Nellie Murray; *Kiwi*, Miss Dorothy Wilmot;

Vestida de Culteria y Compania, Miss Lizzie St. Quinten. Withdrawn 26th January.—Preceded by **THE HOUSE OF LORDS**. Cast: *Henry*, Duke of Hanover Square, Mr. Charles Crook; *Halifax Finsbury*, Mr. V. Drew; *Mr. Murgatroyd*, Mr. Frederick Seymour; *Emmeline*, Miss Carrie Fenton; *Lady Victoria Portobello*, Miss Maud Maude.

26. PAPA'S WIFE: Duologue, by Seymour Hicks and F. C. Phillips; Music by Ellaline Terriss. **Lyric**.

FEBRUARY.

2. AN ARTIST'S MODEL: Musical Comedy in Two Acts, by Owen Hall; Lyrics by Harry Greenbank; Music by Sidney Jones. **Daly's**. Cast: *Adele*, Miss Marie Tempest; *Lady Barbara Cripps*, Miss Leonora Braham; *Lucien*, Miss Nina Cadiz; *Jessie*, Miss Marie Studholme; *Rose*, Miss Kate Cannon; *Christine*, Miss Alice Davis; *Ruby*, Miss Kate Adams; *Violet*, Miss Lettice Fairfax; *Geraldine*, Miss Hettie Hamer; *Amy Cripps*, Miss Louie Pounds; *Jane*, Miss Sybil Grey; *Miss Manvers*, Miss Nellie Gregory; *Daisy Vane*, Miss Letty Lind; *Rudolph Blair*, Mr. C. Hayden Coffin; *Sir George St. Alban*, Mr. Eric Lewis; *Archie Pendillon*, Mr. Yorke Stephens; *The Earl of Thamesmead*, Mr. Lawrence D'Orsay; *Algernon St. Alban*, Mr. J. Farren Soutar; *Carbonnet*, Mr. Maurice Farkoa; *Apthorpe*, Mr. Gilbert Porteous; *Maddox*, Mr. Conway Dixon; *James Cripps*, Mr. E. M. Robson; *Smoggins*, Mr. W. Blakeley; *Madame Amelie*, Miss Lottie Venne. Transferred to the **Lyric**, 28th May; returned to **Daly's**, 28th September. Still running.

4. THE BABES; OR, W(H)INES FROM THE WOOD: Burlesque, by H. Paulton, written up to date by A. C. Shelley. Revival at the **Strand**. Cast: *Tessie*, Miss Alice Atherton; *Pattie Buttre*, Miss Elaine Gryce; *Bertie Patchoulie*, Miss Mary Allestree; *Lady Buttre*, Miss Ada Palmer; *Maude*, Miss Violet Neville; *Miss Specs*, Miss Annie Goward; *Victor*, Miss Fanny Davenport; *Reginald*, Miss Agnes Pendennis; *Margery*, Miss Pollie Bonheur; *Rosina*, Miss Ray Vivian; *Clementina*,

Miss Ida Young; *Queenie*, Miss Patty Thornhill; *Sir Rowland Buttre*, Mr. David James; *Charlie Bunk*, Miss Adeline Vaudrey; *Bill Booty*, Mr. J. J. Dallas; *Ralph Reckless*, Mr. Edgar Stevens; *Dr. Bolus*, Mr. J. D. Saunders; *Police Inspector*, Mr. Holland; *Dolly*, Mr. Willie Edouin. "The Babes" only ran a few nights.

5. MARGATE: A Farcical Comedy in Three Acts, by Barton White (tentative afternoon performance). **Terry's.** Cast: *General Piercy*, Mr. Leslie Kenyon; *Tooting Beck*, Mr. Richard Purdon; *Arthur Vereker*, Mr. Harcourt Beatty; *Willie*, Mr. E. H. Kelly; *Tobias Dodd*, Mr. Robert Nainby; *Stephens*, Mr. E. Dagnall; *Inspector of Police*, Mr. Harry Norton; *Police-man*, Mr. Henry Benton; *Helen Vereker*, Miss Olga Kate Noyle; *Mrs. Beck*, Miss Dolores Drummond; *Kitty*, Miss Amelia Gruhn; *Pauline*, Miss Ina Goldsmith; *Mrs. Stephens*, Miss Katie Neville; *Mulame Tulipon*, Mrs. B. M. De Solla; *Eliza*, Miss Jessie Danvers.

9. A LEADER OF MEN: Comedy in Three Acts, by Charles E. D. Ward. **Comedy.** Cast: *Robert Llewelyn, M.P.*, Mr. Fred Terry; *Lord Killarney, M.P.*, Mr. Will Dennis; *Archdeacon Baldwin*, Mr. Joseph Carne; *Louis Farquhar, M.P.*, Mr. H. B. Irving; *Morton Stone, M.P.*, Mr. W. Wyes; *Jack Carnforth*, Mr. Sydney Brough; *Adolphus Poole*, Mr. Stuart Champion; *Llewelyn's Servant*, Mr. J. Byron; *Footman*, Mr. M. Browne; *Lady Solway*, Miss Le Thiere; *Mrs. Alsager Ellis*, Miss Alma Murray; *Barbara Deane*, Miss May Harvey; *Mrs. Dundas*, Miss Marion Terry. Withdrawn 8th March.—**SOWING THE WIND** was revived on 9th March.

13. THOROUGHbred: A Comic Play in Three Acts, by Ralph R. Lumley. **Toole's.** Cast: *Lord Sandacre*, Mr. John Billington; *The Hon. Blenkinsopp Carlingham*, Mr. Fitzroy Morgan; *John Rimple*, Mr. J. L. Toole; *A. V. Decker*, Mr. C. M. Lowne; *Claude Nizril*, Mr. Edward A. Coventry; *Jeb Tosh*, Mr. George Shelton; *Jennings*, Mr. Frank J. Arlton; *Wokeham*, Master Alec Boles; *The Hon. Wilhelmina Carlingham*, Miss Henrietta Watson; *Miss*

Pallingham, Miss Cora Poole; *Mrs. Rimple*, Miss Kate Carlyon; *Delia Rimple*, Miss Florence Fordyce. Withdrawn 8th June; reproduced (after a provincial tour) 3rd September; finally withdrawn 8th September, when Mr. Toole's tenancy of this theatre ended. (Mr. Toole's part was played by Mr. Westland or by Mr. Rutland Barrington during greater part of the London season.)—Preceded by **THE SECRET**. Cast: *Dupuis*, Mr. H. Westland; *Valare*, Mr. C. Lowe; *Thomas*, Mr. George Shelton; *Porter*, Mr. C. Brunton; *Cecile*, Miss Kate Carlyon; *Angelica*, Miss Alice Kingsley.—Mr. George Grossmith gave his drawing-room entertainment in association with "Thoroughbred" for some time.

14. THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST:

A Trivial Comedy in Three Acts, by Oscar Wilde. **St. James's**. Cast: *John Worthing*, Mr. George Alexander; *Algernon Moncrieffe*, Mr. Allan Aynesworth; *The Rev. Canon Chasuble*, Mr. H. H. Vincent; *Merriman*, Mr. Frank Dyall; *Lane*, Mr. F. Kinsey Peile; *Lady Bracknell*, Miss Rose Leclercq; *The Hon. Gwendolen Fairfax*, Miss Irene Vanbrugh; *The Hon. Cecily Cardew*, Miss Evelyn Millard; *Miss Prism*, Mrs. George Canninge. Withdrawn 8th May.—Preceded by **IN THE SEASON**, a One Act Play by E. Langdon Mitchell. Cast: *Sir Harry Collingwood*, Mr. Herbert Waring; *Edward Fairburne*, Mr. Arthur Royston; *Sybil March*, Miss Elliott Page.

16. **AN M.P.'S WIFE**: A Play in Four Acts, adapted from T. Terrell's novel, "A Woman of Heart." **Opera Comique**. Produced for one week only. Cast: *John Armytage, M.P.*, Mr. William Herbert; *Sir Richard Macklin*, Mr. Frederick de Lara; *Frank Everard*, Mr. Rothbury Evans; *William Sparrow*, Mr. Percy Bell; *Alexander Jephson*, Mr. J. Hastings Batson; *Job Venables*, Mr. E. Rochelle; *A Hirel Waiter*, Mr. Adam Sprange; *Robert Fenwick*, Mr. Charles Glenney; *Ruth Elliott*, Miss T. White; *Lady Calcott*, Miss Alexes Leighton; *Lucy Travers*, Miss Alice Dukes; *Rose Bellamy*, Miss Ina Goldsmith; *Elise*, Miss Dorothy Lawson.—Preceded by **A STAGE COACH**, a Comedy in One Act, by Frederick de Lara. Cast: *Colonel Bumpus*, Mr. E. Rochelle;

Robert de Vere Trevelyan, Mr. Frederick de Lara; *Mrs. Turtle-dove*, Miss Alexes Leighton; *May*, Miss Alice Dukes; *Brown*, Miss Ina Goldsmith.

18. THE RED SQUADRON: Drama in Four Acts, by J. Harkins, jun., and J. MacMahon. (Produced for copy-right purposes on 9th August, 1894, at the Bijou Theatre, Bayswater.) **Pavilion.** Cast: *General da Romacio*, Mr. Arthur Lyle; *Francisco*, Mr. Charles Coleman; *Robert Staunton*, Mr. Edward O'Neill; *Paul de Silveria*, Mr. Royston Keith; *General Fonseca*, Mr. Horace Mead; *Horatio Frampton*, Mr. George V. Wybrow; *Harry Marlinton*, Mr. H. Buss; *Santos*, Mr. J. W. Selby; *Admiral D'Atonis*, Mr. F. Sindall; *Admiral Walker*, Mr. P. Darwin; *Admiral von Weigand*, Mr. L. Courtney; *An Admiral*, Mr. George Roberts; *Bacho*, Mr. A. Campion; *Jacko*, Mr. Claude Warden; *Marie Silveria*, Miss Rose Meller; *Therese*, Miss Edith Giddens; *Hope Staunton*, Mr. Clarence Shirley; *Martha Williamson*, Miss Evelyn Shelley.

MARCH.

2. GENTLEMAN JOE, THE HANSOM CABBY: Musical Farce, Words and Lyrics by Basil Hood; Music by Walter Slaughter. **Prince of Wales's.** Cast: *Gentleman Joe*, Mr. Arthur Roberts; *Lord Donnybrook*, Mr. William Philp; *Mr. Hughie Jaqueson*, Mr. Evelyn Vernon; *Mr. Ralli Carr*, Mr. E. H. Kelly; *William*, Miss Clara Jecks; *Dawson*, Mr. Eric Thorne; *James*, Mr. Picton Roxborough; *Mr. Pilkington Jones*, Mr. W. H. Denny; *Mrs. Ralli Carr*, Miss Aida Jenoure; *The Hon. Mabel Kavanagh*, Miss Kate Cutler; *Miss Lalage Potts*, Miss Sadie Jerome; *Miss Pilkington Jones*, Miss Carrie Benton; *Miss Lucy Pilkington Jones*, Miss Audrey Ford; *Miss Ada Pilkington Jones*, Miss Ellas Dee; *Miss Amy Pilkington Jones*, Miss Eva Ellerslie; *Emma*, Miss Kitty Loftus. Still running.

2. DANDY DICK WHITTINGTON: Opera Bouffe, by G. R. Sims and Ivan Caryll. **Avenue.** Cast: *Sir Achilles Fitzwarren*, Mr. A. J. Evelyn; *Lady Fitzwarren*, Mr. John

F. Sheridan; *Captain Fairfax, R.N.*, Mr. James Barr; *Larry O'Brannagan*, Mr. Henry Wright; *Koko Gaga*, Mr. Robert Pateman; *Auguste*, Mr. Frederick Vaughan; *Tom*, Mr. Harold Patterson; *Phra Maha*, Mr. H. N. Wenman; *Alice*, Miss Ethel Haydon; *Lola*, Miss Bertha Meyers; *Sa Dee*, Miss Gracie Whiteford; *Willasee*, Miss Florence Levey; *Nuntahtari*, Miss Ellen Goss; *Chantawee*, Miss Maude Fisher; *Jenny*, Miss I. Du Foye; *Zoe*, Miss L. Lisle; *Nina*, Miss Morgan; *Susan*, Miss Elcho; *Song Kla*, Mr. M'Bride; *Phung Tha*, Mr. Shale; *Chanta Buree*, Mr. Wilkes; *See Papat*, Mr. Davies; *Dick Whittington*, Miss May Yohe. Withdrawn 13th July.

4. SAVED FROM THE SEA: Drama in Four Acts, by Arthur Shirley and Benjamin Landeck. **Pavilion.** Cast: *Dan Ellington*, Mr. Charles Glenney; *Jim Weaver*, Mr. Harry M'Clelland; *Peter Scalcher*, Mr. Julian Cross; *Richard Fenton*, Mr. Albert Marsh; *Billy Snooks*, Mr. Maitland Marler; *Jenkins*, Mr. Trevor Warde; *Jack*, Miss Gladys Whyte; *Inspector Jennings*, Mr. G. Webber; *Chaplain*, Mr. George Yates; *Head Warder*, Mr. G. Lawrence; *Second Warder*, Mr. Harris; *Nancy Ellington*, Miss Beaumont Collins; *Mrs. Blake*, Miss Harriet Clifton; *Polly Blake*, Miss Fanny Selby.

9. THAT TERRIBLE GIRL: Musical Farcical Comedy, by J. Stephens. **Royalty.** Cast: *Miss Clover Atkins*, Miss Hope Booth; *Miss Prudence Primrose*, Miss Kitty Leefred; *Mrs. Van Schooler*, Miss Ida Hazledean; *Miss Pansy Van Schooler*, Miss Lillie M'Intyre; *Mr. Phineas Chatterhawk*, Mr. Edward Lauri; *Mr. Horace Fairfax*, Mr. J. R. Hatfield; *Dr. Pilsbury Barker*, Mr. F. Glover; *Jack Babbitt*, Mr. Wyvel; *U. R. Slick*, Mr. Douglas Hamilton; *Tim M'Swat*, Mr. Stephen Bond; *Silas Saltzer*, Mr. George Giddens. Withdrawn 22nd March.—Preceded by **HER GUARDIAN:** Comedietta, by J. R. Brown. (Originally known as "Love's Secret.") Cast: *Mr. Davenant*, Mr. J. R. Hatfield; *Mr. Luttrell*, Mr. Wyvell; *Mr. Martineau*, Mr. Douglas Hamilton; *Violet Fane*, Miss Ida Heron; *Miss Morant*, Miss Leslie.

12. A LOVING LEGACY: Farcical Comedy in Three Acts, by F. W. Sidney, originally produced in America.

Strand. Cast: *Harry Kingsley*, Mr. William H. Day; *Edward Pommeroy*, Mr. Oswald Yorke; *Savory Bird*, Mr. Alfred Maltby; *Terence*, Mr. Mark A. Kinghorne; *Mohammed El Tebkir*, Mr. J. A. Rosier; *Mrs. O'Rourke*, Miss Lizzie Henderson; *Kitty O'Rourke*, Miss May Whitty; *May*, Miss Nancy Noel; *Susan*, Miss Katie Lee. Transferred to the **Opera Comique** 15th April, withdrawn 20th April.—Preceded by **SALT TEARS**: a Serio-comic Drama in One Act, by T. W. Speight. Cast: *Ben Briny*, Mr. H. R. Teesdale; *Phil Shingle*, Mr. Robb Harwood; *Jim Riley's Father*, Mr. J. M'Kenzie; *Ruth Mayfield*, Miss Olga Garland; *Lady Janet Trevor*, Miss Ettie Williams.

13. THE NOTORIOUS MRS. EBBSMITH: Play in Four Acts, by A. W. Pinero. **Garrick.** Cast: *The Duke of St. Olpherts*, Mr. John Hare; *Sir Sandford Cleeve*, Mr. Ian Robertson; *Lucas Cleeve*, Mr. Forbes Robertson; *The Rev. Amos Winterfield*, Mr. C. Aubrey Smith; *Sir John Broderick*, Mr. Joseph Carne; *Dr. Kirke*, Mr. Fred Thorne; *Fortune*, Mr. Gerald Du Maurier; *Antonio Poppi*, Mr. C. F. Caravoglia; *Agnes*, Mrs. Patrick Campbell (replaced on 15th May by Miss Olga Nethersole); *Gertrude Thorpe*, Miss Ellis Jeffreys; *Sybil Cleeve*, Miss Eleanor Calhoun; *Nella*, Miss Mary Halsey; *Hephzibah*, Mrs. Charles Groves. Withdrawn 14th June.

15. A MAN'S LOVE: Play in Three Acts, adapted from the Dutch of J. C. de Vos, by J. T. Grein and C. W. Jarvis, originally produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre on 25th June 1889 (a morning performance); now reproduced at the **Opera Comique** (Independent Theatre). Cast: *Frank Upworth*, Mr. Herbert Flemming; *Georgie*, Miss Mary Keegan; *Emily*, Miss Winifred Fraser; *Mary*, Miss Jay Lupton.—Preceded by **SALVE**: a Dramatic Fragment in One Act, by Mrs. Oscar Beringer. Cast: *Desmond Ogilvie*, Mr. William Haviland; *Rex Ogilvie*, Mr. Matthew Brodie; *Deborah Ogilvie*, Mrs. Theodore Wright.

23. THE BLUE BOAR: Farce in Three Acts, by Louis N. Parker and Murray Carson (produced originally at the Court Theatre, Liverpool). **Terry's.** Cast: *Robert Honeydew*, Mr.

Edward Terry; *Cyril Strawthwaite*, Mr. Harcourt Beatty; *The Griffin*, Mr. George Belmore; *Boots*, Mr. Leslie Kenyon; *Dr. Prendergast*, Miss Fanny Brough; *Mrs. Pounder*, Miss Alexes Leighton; *Millicent*, Miss Madge M'Intosh. Withdrawn 20th April.

25. IN AN ATTIC: Comedietta, by Wilton Jones. **St. James's.** An afternoon performance. Cast: *Arthur Clarges*, Mr. Philip Cuningham; *Joe Dixon*, Mr. W. H. Denny; *Rosalind*, Miss Annie Hill.

25. Théâtre de l'Œuvre season began at the **Opera Comique.** Productions: **ROSMERSHOLM, L'INTRUSE, PÉLLEAS ET MÉLISANDE, and SOLNESS LE CONSTRUCTEUR.**

28. FORTUNE'S FOOL: Monologue, by Henry Hamilton. **Haymarket.**

APRIL.

4. THE NEWEST WOMAN: Musical Comedietta, by Henry Chance Newton; Music by Georges Jacobi. **Avenue.** Cast: *Girtonia Fitzgiggle*, Miss Maud Holland; *Melchizedeck Jossier*, Mr. Lytton Grey.

13. THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME: Dramain Four Acts, by Franklyn Fyles and David Belasco (originally produced in the United States). **Adelphi.** Cast: *General Kennion*, Mr. F. H. Macklin; *Major Burleigh*, Mr. Charles Fulton; *Lieutenant Hawkesworth*, Mr. William Terriss; *Lieutenant Morton Parlow*, Mr. W. L. Abingdon; *Arthur Penwick, M.D.*, Mr. E. W. Gardiner; *Private Jones*, Mr. G. W. Cockburn; *John Ladru*, Mr. Julian Cross; *Dick Burleigh*, Miss Dora Barton; *Sergeant Dix*, Mr. Ackerman May; *M'Glynn*, Mr. Richard Purdon; *Andy Jackson*, Mr. Edwin Rorke; *Kate Kennion*, Miss Millward; *Lucy Hawkesworth*, Miss Hope Dudley; *Fawn*, Miss Mary Allestree; *Wilber's Ann*, Miss Marie Montrose; Withdrawn 10th August.—During the run Miss Cynthia Brooke succeeded Miss Hope Dudley, and Miss Nannie Comstock,

the "original" representative of the character in America, succeeded Miss Marie Montrose.

13. WOMAN'S CAPRICE: Comedietta in One Act, adapted by H. M. Lewis from the German of "Gott sei dank; der Tisch ist gedeckt." **Prince of Wales's.** Cast: *Captain Flareupfe*, Mr. Eric Thorne; *Mr. St. John Firmely*, Mr. Evelyn Vernon; *William Jones*, Mr. Picton Roxborough; *Mrs. Flareupfe*, Miss Adelaide Newton; *Mrs. St. John Firmely*, Miss Ellas Dee; *May*, Miss Attie Chester.

15. FANNY: Farce in Three Acts, by George R. Sims and Cecil Raleigh (originally produced at the Prince of Wales's, Liverpool, 8th April 1895). **Strand.** Cast: *Captain Gerald O'Brien*, Mr. J. L. Shine; *Professor Barnabas Bixley*, Mr. William H. Day; *Kellaway*, Mr. Owen Harris; *Saunders*, Mr. T. P. Haynes; *Harold Gregory*, Mr. Osmond Shillingford; *Bob Tapping*, Mr. George Blackmore; *George*, Mr. J. Mahoney; *Joseph Barnes*, Mr. Robb Harwood; *Flo. Barnes*, Miss Lydia Cowell; *Grace Dormer*, Miss May Whitty; *Paquita O'Brien*, Miss Alma Stanley. Withdrawn 1st June.—Preceded by **THE BACKSLIDER:** Duologue in One Act, by Osmond Shillingford. Cast: *Mrs. Agatha Dolomite*, Miss May Whitty; *Mr. Antony Dolomite*, Mr. Osmond Shillingford.

15. THE WORKGIRL: Drama in a Prologue and Four Acts, by George Conquest and Arthur Shirley. **Surrey.** Cast: *Frank Belton*, Mr. Ernest Leicester; *Natty Wobbs*, Mr. Arthur Conquest; *Silas Sephton*, Mr. Frank Lister; *The Hon. Edgar Drayton*, Mr. John Webb; *Loo Genesis*, Mr. George Conquest, Jun.; *Tom Courtney*, Mr. Fred Conquest; *Keeley Rendale*, Mr. Charles Cruikshanks; *Bob Tolge*, Mr. T. German; *Flash Fred*, Mr. J. Miller; *Suds*, Mr. W. Stevens; *Tosh Tomson*, Mr. W. Donne; *Joe Perks*, Mr. H. Moore; *Richard Bracknell*, Mr. Arthur Hall; *Watty Wibbles*, Mr. J. O. Fraser; *Dr. Pearson*, Mr. Reuben Leslie; *Inspector Graham*, Mr. W. Biddle; *Mary Belton*, Miss Olga Kate Vernon; *Evelyn Sephton*, Miss Cissy Farrell; *Mrs. Wobbs*, Miss E. Cardoza;

Jenny Wibbles, Miss Laura Dyson; *Madame Lamarshe*, Miss C. Percival; *Harriett*, Miss Issy Behring; *Ria*, Miss Amy Dyson; *Liza*, Miss M. Hall.

15. BEFORE THE DAWN: Play in One Act, by Henry Byatt. **Opera Comique.** Cast: *Sir John Radley*, *Bart.*, Mr. Mathew Brodie; *Sallie Gliberry*, Miss Katie Lee; *Lena*, Miss Ettie Williams; *Constable*, Mr. H. R. Teesdale.

17. DELIA HARDING: Play in Three Acts, adapted by Comyns Carr from the French of Victorien Sardou. **Comedy.** Cast: *Sir Arthur Studley*, *C.B.*, Mr. Cyril Maude; *Clive Studley*, Mr. Fred Terry; *Stanley French*, Mr. Mackintosh; *Julian Ormsby*, Mr. Gilbert Farquhar; *Percival Lumley*, Mr. Lyston Lyle; *Sir Christopher Carstairs*, Mr. Chandler; *The Syndic of Bellagio*, Mr. Will Dennis; *Clerk to the Syndic*, Mr. Mules Brown; *Captain Simmonds*, Mr. Blakiston; *Waiter*, Mr. J. Byron; *Lady Carstairs*, Miss Rose Leclercq; *Mrs. Venables*, Miss Dorothy Dorr; *Mrs. Emmeline Jay*, Miss Eva Williams; *Janet Ross*, Mrs. E. H. Brooke; *Servant*, Miss Fleming Norton; *Delia Harding*, Miss Marion Terry. Withdrawn 17th May.

18. THE LADIES' IDOL: Farcical Comedy in Three Acts, by Arthur Law (originally produced at the Theatre Royal, Bournemouth, 28th March, 1895). **Vaudeville.** Cast: *Lionel Delamere*, Mr. Weedon Grossmith; *The Duke of Castleford*, Mr. Sydney Warden; *Lord Finch Calowdale*, Mr. C. P. Little; *Sir Simon Roebuck*, Mr. Arthur Helmore; *Mr. Purley*, Mr. John Beauchamp; *Mr. Wix*, Mr. Frederick Volpe; *Mr. Kurdle*, Mr. Thomas Kingston; *Mr. Beamish*, Mr. Kenneth Douglas; *Simmons*, Mr. L. Power; *The Duchess of Castleford*, Miss Gladys Homfrey; *The Countess of Groombridge*, Miss Helen Ferrers; *Lady Helen Frant*, Miss Esme Beringer; *Lady Eugenia Rostrevor*, Miss R. Sergeantson; *Lady Boyce*, Miss B. Crawford; *Mrs. Somerville Smith*, Miss Beatrice Hayden; *Miss Minniver*, Miss Alma Gordon; *Miss Dora Vale*, Miss May Palfrey; *Mary*, Miss A. Beet. Withdrawn 15th June.

25. BARON GOLOSH: Operetta Bouffe in Two Acts, adapted from Maurice Ordonneau and Edmond Audran's "L'Oncle Celestin," with additional numbers by Meyer Lutz (originally produced at the Star Theatre and Opera House, Swansea, 15th April, 1895). **Trafalgar.** Cast: *Baron Go'osh*, Mr. E. J. Lonnen; *Maireau*, Mr. Harry Paulton; *Gustave*, Mr. Scott Russell; *Count Acacia*, Mr. Frank Wyatt; *Viscount Acacia*, Mr. George Humphrey; *Ratinet*, Mr. W. S. Laidlaw; *Hairdresser*, Mr. Stanley Smith; *Tailor*, Mr. V. M. Seymour; *Bootmaker*, Mr. T. F. Lovelace; *Narcisse*, Mr. Ernest Down; *Clementine*, Miss Florence Perry; *Pamela*, Miss M. A. Victor; *Madame de Bel'efontaine*, Miss Violet Melnotte; *Madelon*, Miss Alice Lethbridge; *Therese*, Miss Delia Carlyle; *Dressmaker*, Miss Alwyn; *Florist*, Miss Osland; *Madame Margerine*, Miss Maud Maude; *Madame Gruyere*, Miss Violet Ellacott; *Madame Brie*, Miss Eva Murton; *Countess Acacia*, Miss Sylvia Grey. Withdrawn 8th June.—Preceded by **A HAPPY THOUGHT**, a Play in One Act, by H. Tripp Edgar. Cast: *John Wentworth*, Mr. H. Tripp Edgar; *Jack Wentworth*, Mr. Stanley Smith; *Freddy Woodpeck*, Mr. W. S. Laidlaw; *A Stranger*, Mr. Ernest Down; *Kitty Wentworth*, Miss Kate Ruskin.

25. THE PASSPORT: Play in Three Acts, by B. C. Stephenson and William Yardley (partly founded on Colonel Savage's novel, *My Official Wife*). **Terry's.** Cast: *Ferdinand Sinclair*, Mr. Yorke Stephens; *Christopher Coleman*, Mr. Alfred Maltby; *Bob Coleman*, Mr. Roland Atwood; *Algy Grey*, Mr. Cecil Ramsey; *Henry Harris*, Mr. Compton Coutts; *Pattison*, Mr. Richard Blunt; *Schmerkoff*, Mr. J. L. Mackay; *George Greenwood*, Mr. George Giddens; *Mrs. Coleman*, Miss Fanny Coleman; *Mildred*, Miss Kate Tully; *Violet Tracey*, Miss Grace Lane; *Markham*, Miss Cicely Richards; *Mrs. Darcy*, Miss Gertrude Kingston. Transferred to the Trafalgar (now the Duke of York's Theatre), 29th July. Withdrawn 24th August.—Preceded on 26th April by **A WOMAN'S NO**, a Play in One Act, by Somerville Gibney.

27. VANITY FAIR: Caricature in Three Acts, by G. W. Godfrey. **Court.** Cast: *Lord Arthur Nugent*, G.C.B.,

Mr. Arthur Cecil; *The Duke of Berkshire, K.G.*, Mr. Charles Sugden; *Mr. Brabazon Tegg*, Mr. William Wyes; *Harold Brabazon Tegg*, Mr. Nye Chart; *Sir James Candy*, Mr. Charles Fawcett; *Bertie Rosevere*, Mr. A. Vane Tempest; *Sir Richard Fanshawe*, Mr. Wilfred Draycott; *Villars*, Mr. Howard Sturge; *Smiley*, Mr. W. Cheeseman; *Teale, Q.C.*, Mr. F. Macdonnell; *Foreman*, Mr. H. N. Ray; *Clerk of Arraignment*, Mr. Lane; *Bill Felton*, Mr. G. W. Anson; *The Viscountess of Castleblaney*, Miss Granville; *Lady Jacqueline Villars*, Miss Helena Dacre; *Violet Brabazon Tegg*, Miss Nancy Noel; *Mrs. Chelwynd*, Miss Frances Dillon; *Mrs. Walroni*, Miss Lucy Bertram; *Mrs. Brabazon Tegg*, Mrs. John Wood. Withdrawn 27th July; reproduced 23rd September; withdrawn 2nd November.

MAY.

1. **A HUMAN SPORT**: Drama in One Act, by Austin Friers. **Globe**. A morning performance. Cast: *Herbert Groves*, Mr. Philip Cunningham; *Emile Foudriant*, Mr. Willon Heriot; *Old Nip*, Mr. James A. Welch; *Minnie*, Miss Katherine Glover; *Mrs. Chessle*, Mrs. Theodore Wright.

4. **BYEGONES**: Play in One Act, by A. W. Pinero (produced at the Lyceum on 18th September, 1880). Revival, **Lyceum**. Cast: *The Hon. Curzon Gramshawe*, Mr. Ben Webster; *The Rev. Giles Horncastle*, Mr. Haviland; *Professor Giacomo Mazzoni*, Mr. Sydney Valentine; *Bella*, Miss Ailsa Craig; *Ruby*, Miss Annie Hughes.—Also **A STORY OF WATERLOO**: Sketch by Dr. Conan Doyle. *Corporal Gregory Brewster*, Mr. Irving; *Sergeant Archie Macdonald, R.A.*, Mr. Fuller Mellish; *Col. James Midwinter*, Mr. Ben Webster; *Nora Brewster*, Miss Annie Hughes.—Also **DON QUIXOTE**: Piece founded on an incident in the Romance by Cervantes, by W. G. Wills. *Master Quixada*, Mr. Irving; *Sancho Panza*, Mr. Johnson; *Father Perez*, Mr. Haviland; *Pedro*, Mr. Archer; *A Peasant*, Mr. Reynolds; *Muleteers*, Messrs. Belmore and Rivington; *An'onia*, Miss

de Silva; *Maria*, Miss Milton; *Dulcinea*, Mrs. Lacy; *An Old Woman*, Mr. Innes; *Girls*, Misses Foster, K. Harwood, and Ailsa Craig.*

6. A NEAR SHAVE: Musical Farce, by G. D. Day, Author, and Edward Jones, Composer. **Court.** Cast: *Ebenezer Add'eshaw*, Mr. G. W. Anson; *Josiah Giggins*, Mr. H. O. Cleary; *Arabella Pettifer*, Miss Emmeline Orford.

6. THREEPENNY BITS: Farce by I. Zangwill (originally produced at the Opera House, Chatham, 25th April, 1895). **Garrick.**

7. THE HOME SECRETARY: Play in Three Acts, by R. C. Carton. **Criterion.** Cast: *The Right Hon. Duncan Trendel, M.P.*, Mr. Charles Wyndham; *Sir James Hazlett, Q.C., M.P.*, Mr. Alfred Bishop; *Lord Blayver*, Mr. David James; *Frank Trendel*, Mr. Sydney Brough; *Captain Chesnall*, Mr. Charles Brookfield; *Mr. Thorpe-Didsbury, M.P.*, Mr. H. de Lange; *Rixon*, Mr. H. Deane; *Morris Lecaile*, Mr. Lewis Waller; *Rhoda Trendel*, Miss Julia Neilson; *Lady Clotilda Bramerton*, Miss Dolores Drummond; *Esme Bramerton*, Miss Maud Millett; *Mrs. Thorpe-Didsbury*, Miss Mary Moore. Withdrawn 20th July; reproduced at the Shaftesbury, 2nd October; withdrawn 9th November.

9. THE SKYWARD GUIDE: Drama in Four Acts, by Mrs. Albert Bradshaw and Mark Melford. **Royalty.** An afternoon performance. Cast: *Albert Penrose*, Mr. Loring Fernie; *Hamblen Templeton*, Mr. Harry Mountford; *Wilfred Barfoot*, Mr. Frank Gordon; *Tipper*, Mr. A. D. Pierpoint; *Mr. Craven*, Mr. Roy Byford; *Vernon Strasse*, Miss Jackey-

* Memorandum of repertory revivals:—*The Merchant of Venice*, 17th June; *Faust*, 24th June; *Louis XI.*, 27th June; *Becket*, 1st July; *Much Ado About Nothing*, 4th July; *Charles I.*, 11th July; *The Lyons Mail*, 12th July; *The Corsican Brothers*, 15th July; *Journeys End in Lovers Meeting*, 17th July; *Macbeth*, 24th July; *Nance Oldfield*, 27th July (last performance of the season).

dora Melford; *Christian Strasse*, Mr. Mark Melford; *Joseph*, Mr. Robert Lintott; *Knubel*, Mr. James Ashburn; *Peter*, Mr. Vincent Osborne; *Franz*, Mr. Arthur Edmunds; *Mr. Beauley*, Mr. Vansittart; *Aleppa*, Miss Ethel Payne; *Adrea*, Miss Madge Lewis; *City Clerk*, Mr. Cecil Rutland; *Paulio*, Mr. George Albertazzi; *Gendarme*, Mr. George W. Abron; *The Hon. Mrs. Penrose*, Miss Ethel Arden; *Leonora Garth*, Miss Dora de Winton; *Flavia Strasse*, Miss Annie Stalman; *Freda Colefield*, Miss Eva Willing; *Rosa*, Miss Ida Heron; *Jennie*, Miss Gertrude Price; *Martha*, Miss Margaret Hayes.

11. **THE TRIUMPH OF THE PHILISTINES; and How Mr. Jorgan Preserved the Morals of Market Pewbury under very trying circumstances:** Comedy in Three Acts, by Henry Arthur Jones. **St. James's.** Cast: *Sir Valentine Fellowes*, Mr. George Alexander; *Willie Hessel-tine*, Mr. H. V. Esmond; *Mr. Jorgan*, Mr. Herbert Waring; *Mr. Pote*, Mr. E. M. Robson; *Mr. Blagg*, Mr. Ernest Hendrie; *Mr. Modlin*, Mr. Arthur Royston; *Mr. Skewitt*, Mr. James Welch; *Mr. Wapes*, Mr. H. H. Vincent; *Mr. Corby*, Mr. Duncan Tovey; *Thomas Blagg*, Master Frank Saker; *Wheeler*, Mr. Mark Paton; *Lady Beauboys*, Lady Monckton; *Alma Suleny*, Miss Elliott Page; *Miss Angela Soar*, Miss Blanch Wilmot; *Sally Lebrune*, Miss Juliet Nesville. Withdrawn 19th June. — Revivals of **THE SECOND MRS. TAN-QUERAY** on 20th June and of **THE IDLER** on 4th July ensued.

13. **THE RECKONING:** Play in Four Acts, by Silvanus Dauncey (originally produced at the Globe at an afternoon performance, 3rd December 1891). **Grand.** Cast: *Captain Philip Conway*, Mr. Charles Glenney; *Mr. Leach*, Mr. Charles Dalton; *Sir William Deacon*, Mr. Robert Macdonald; *Frank Gibson*, Mr. W. Graham Brown; *Dr. McPherson*, Mr. Arthur Rowlands; *The Rev. Samuel Oliver*, Mr. Horniman; *Rigby Nicks*, Mr. Arthur Whitby; *Slisher*, Mr. J. Willes; *Duckett*, Mr. R. E. Warton; *Dora Deacon*, Miss Marion Lind; *Mrs. Chilcott*, Miss Pendennis; *Janet*, Miss C. Lindsey; *Constance Oliver*, Miss Alma Murray.

22. THE PRUDE'S PROGRESS: Comedy in Three Acts, by Jerome K. Jerome and Eden Philpotts (originally produced at the Theatre Royal, Cambridge, 16th May 1895). **Comedy.** Cast: *Adam Cherry*, Mr. Edward Righton; *Jack Medbury*, Mr. W. T. Lovell; *Ted Morris*, Mr. Ernest Leicester; *Theodore Travers*, Mr. Arthur Playfair; *Ben Dixon*, Mr. Cyril Maude; *Nelly Morris*, Miss Lena Ashwell; *Primrose Deane*, Miss Ettie Williams; *Mrs. Wheedles*, Miss Alice Mansfield; *Mrs. Ben Dixon*, Miss Fanny Brough. Transferred to **Terry's Theatre**; withdrawn 14th September.

26. FÉDORA: Sardou's Play, adapted into English by Herman Merivale. **Haymarket.** Cast: *Count Loris Ipanoff*, Mr. Tree; *Jean de Siriex*, Mr. Nutcombe Gould; *Pierre Boroff*, Mr. Berte Thomas; *M. Rouvel*, Mr. C. M. Hallard; *M. Vernet*, Mr. Mackay; *M. Laroche*, Mr. Edward Ferris; *Dr. Loreck*, Mr. Edmund Maurice; *Gretch*, Mr. Holman Clark; *Bo'eslas Lasinski*, Mr. Leslie; *Tchileff*, Mr. Charles Allan; *Désirée*, Mr. Herbert Ross; *Dmitri*, Mr. Lesly Thomson; *Kirill*, Mr. F. Percival Stevens; *Princess Fédora Romazoff*, Mrs. Patrick Campbell; *Countess Olga Soukareff*, Mrs. Bancroft; *Baroness Ockar*, Miss Hilda Hanbury; *Madame de Tournis*, Miss Routh; *Marka*, Miss Aylward. Mrs. Tree eventually replaced Mrs. Campbell. Withdrawn 20th July.

27. Madame Sarah Bernhardt's season at **Daly's Theatre** began. Productions:—**GISMONDA, LA FEMME DE CLAUDE, MAGDA, LA PRINCESSE LOINTAINE, LA TOSCA, IZEYL, and LA DAME AUX CAMELIAS.**

JUNE.

3. Eleonora Duse's season of eight performances began at **Drury Lane.** Productions:—**LA DAME AUX CAMELIAS; LA FEMME DE CLAUDE; MAGDA; CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA; LA LOCANDIERA.** On and after 27th June, Eleonora Duse appeared at the **Savoy.**

3. GOSSIP: Comedy in Four Acts, by Clyde Fitch and Leo Dietrichstein. **Grand.** Cast: *Mrs. Barry*, Mrs. Langtry;

Mr. Barry, Mr. James W. Pigott; *Mrs. Stanford*, Miss Beverley Sitgreaves; *Mr. Stanford*, Mr. Oscar Adye; *Miriam Stanford*, Miss Kate Bealby; *Mrs. Cummings*, Miss Clara Daniells; *Clara Cummings*, Miss Frances Wyatt; *Dr. Robins*, Mr. A. Holmes-Gore; *Gas'ou Berney*, Mr. Ivan Watson; *Hallows*, Mr. Easton; *Servant*, Mr. J. Topper; *Count Marcy*, Mr. Herbert Flemming.—Preceded by a "trifle" in One Act by Russell Vaun, entitled **THE POLKA**. Cast: *Mr. Maxwell*, Mr. Ivan Watson; *Mr. Chester*, Mr. A. Holmes Gore; *Mrs. Chester*, Miss Kate Bealby.

3. SETTLING DAY: Drama in Four Acts, by F. A. Scudamore. **Surrey**.

3. THE FORTY THIEVES: Burlesque. **Standard**.

13. AN AVERAGE MAN; OR, HOW THE AVERAGE BECAME THE ABNORMAL: Comedy Drama of Modern Life in Four Acts, by "S. X. Courte" (originally produced at the Pleasure Gardens Theatre, Folkestone, 6th March 1895). **Opera Comique**. An afternoon performance. Cast: *Vivian Allardyce*, Mr. Loring Fernie; *Robert Allardyce*, Mr. Fred Grove; *John Allardyce*, Mr. G. R. Foss; *Arthur Ingersoll*, Mr. Alfred Kendrick; *The Hon. Bertie Thoytes*, Mr. James Lindsay; *Montie Marlborough*, Mr. Fred Permain; *Cecil Hampton*, Mr. Hurdman-Lucas; *A Scout*, Mr. Hugh Bodien; *The Hon. Dolly Thoytes*, Miss Kate Bealby; *Hilda Floyd Fanshawe*, Miss Marjorie Griffiths; *Winifred Dayne*, Miss Dora de Winton.

15. A PRACTICAL JOKER: Comedietta, by C. L. Hume. **Comedy**. Cast: *Charles Dalrymple*, Mr. Arthur Playfair; *Dawson*, Mr. George Hawtrey; *Adela Grey*, Miss Doris Templeton; *Sybil Forsyth*, Miss Lena Ashwell.

15. Revival of A PAIR OF SPECTACLES and A QUIET RUBBER at the **Garrick**; Mr. Hare's farewell appearance.

17. First performance at Drury Lane of the Ducal Court Company of Saxe Coburg and Gotha. Productions during the

season :—**DER VOGELHANDLER, DIE EHRE, HASEMANS TOCHTER, DIE FLEDERMAUS, HANSEL UND GRETTEL, HEIMATH VERKAUFTE BRAUT, DER WILDSCHUTZ, BERUCHMTE FRAU, and DER FREISCHUTZ.** Some performances were also given at the **Savoy** by the dramatic section of the Ducal Company of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, alternatively with those of Eleonora Duse.

17. THE MINX AND THE MAN: Burlesque in Four Scenes, written by Frank Lindo, Lyrics by W. Skelton, Music by Thomas Prentis. **Parkhurst.**—Also **THE LEGACY:** a Comedietta by Frank Lindo.

17. A MODERN HYPATIA, by Mabel Collins (originally produced for copyright purposes at the Bijou Theatre, Bayswater, 22nd February 1894). **Terry's.** Cast: *Lord Arthur Davenant*, Mr. Edmund Gurney; *Lewin Alexis*, Mr. Acton Bond; *Sir George Martyn*, Mr. Frank Adair; *Francis*, Mr. Rudge Harding; *Dr. Vane Tylden*, Mr. Charles Sugden; *Mrs. Fitzpatrick*, Mrs. Wilton; *Rose*, Miss Edith Crauford; *Mrs. Vane Tylden*, Miss Agnes Hill; *Servant*, Miss Eileen Munro; *Marcia Royal*, Mrs. Theodore Wright. An afternoon performance.—Also **TWO WOMEN**, by "One of Them": Dramatic Fragment. Cast: *Lady Caroline Villiers*, Mrs. Theodore Wright; *Frank Villiers*, Mr. Leslie Delwaide; *Valerie de Lorme*, Mrs. Wilton; *Collins*, Mr. Fenton.

24. THE TERROR OF PARIS: Drama in Four Acts, by A. E. Hill-Mitchelson and Charles Longden (originally produced at the Victoria Opera House, Burnley). **Pavilion.**

24. THE DEAD PAST: Drama, by Austin Fryers. **Parkhurst.** Cast: *Edward Crofton*, Mr. H. K. Fraser-Tyler; *Sir Maurice Hardy*, Mr. Douglas Gordon; *Sarah*, Miss Emma Parry; *Doll Barton*, Miss Mabel Hardinge.—Also **THE PICTURE-DEALER:** Comedy in Three Acts, by Henry Reichardt and Arnold Goldsworthy (performed for copyright purposes at Ladbroke Hall on Thursday, 30th June 1892, and played for the first time at a London

theatre at the Strand on 4th July 1892). **Parkhurst.** Cast: *Ephraim Pottle*, Mr. John Hudspeth; *Phil Tiptoff*, Mr. Trevor Warde; *The Rev. Simon Nocker*, Mr. Gilbert Arrandale; *Bartholomew Crisp*, Mr. Maurice Drew; *Christopher Whiting*, Mr. H. Fraser-Tyler; *Samuel Huggins*, Mr. James Francis; *Mr. McPherson*, Mr. George Brooke; *Biggs*, Mr. Stanley Grahame; *William Scroggs*, Mr. Algie Spalding; *A Warrant Officer*, Mr. A. S. Hardy; *Banker's Clerk*, Mr. Edward Wright; *Florrie*, Miss Violet Austen; *Mrs. Tiptoff*, Miss Maud Stanhope; *Miss Nocker*, Miss Emily Beauchamp; *Martha*, Miss Katherine Glover.

25. ALL OR NOTHING: Episode, by Hamilton Aide. **Criterion.** Afternoon performance for a Charity. Cast: *Sir Henry Dashwood*, Mr. H. Revelle; *Giulia*, Lady Dashwood, Miss E. Calhoun; *Servant*, Mr. A. Royston.

25. THE RAILROAD OF LOVE: Comedy in Four Acts, adapted by Augustin Daly from the German (originally produced in London at the Gaiety on 3rd May 1888). **Daly's.** Cast: *General Everett*, Mr. Edwin Varrey; *Lieutenant Howell Everett*, Mr. Frank Worthing; *Phenix Scuttieby*, Mr. James Lewis; *Adam Grinnidge*, Mr. George Clarke; *Judge Van Ryker*, Mr. Campbell Gollan; *Benny Dumaresq*, Mr. Chester Devonne; *Truffles*, Mr. Robert Shepherd; *Crusty*, Mr. George Wharnock; *Tom*, Mr. Bosworth; *Mrs. Eutycia Laburnam*, Mrs. G. H. Gilbert; *Viva Van Ryker*, Miss Sybil Carlisle; *Cherry*, Miss Jeanne Vorhees; *Valentine Osprey*, Miss Ada Rehan.

26. THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF MISS BROWN: Farcical Play in Three Acts, by Robert Buchanan and Charles Marlowe. **Vaudeville.** Cast: *Miss Romney*, Miss M. A. Victor; *Angela Brightwell*, Miss May Palfrey; *Euphemia Schwartz*, Miss Esme Beringer; *Matilda Jones*, Miss Daisy Brough; *Millicent Loveridge*, Miss Jay Holford; *Clara Loveridge*, Miss Grace Dudley; *Mrs. O'Gallagher*, Miss Gladys Homfrey; *Emma*, Miss Marion Murray; *Major*

O'Gallagher, Mr. J. Beauchamp; *Private Docherty*, Mr. Power; *Herr von Moser*, Mr. Robb Harwood; *Mr. Hibbertson*, Mr. Gilbert Farquhar; *Sergeant Tanner*, Mr. Lionel Brough; *Capt. Courtenay*, Mr. Frederick Kerr. Transferred to **Terry's**, 5th October. Withdrawn 8th February 1896.—Preceded by **BETWEEN THE POSTS**. Cast: *Geoffrey Warburton*, Mr. John Buckstone; *Edith Neville*, Miss Measor; *Lucy*, Miss Grace Dudley.

27. QWONG HI: Farcical Comedy in Three Acts, by Fenton Mackay (originally produced 1st April 1895, at the Princess's Theatre, Bristol). **Terry's**. Cast: *Qwong Hi*, Mr. Willie Edouin; *Frank Brett*, Mr. Stewart Champion; *Fred Earle*, Mr. Douglass Hamilton; *Captain Lander*, Mr. W. F. Hawtrey; *Roy Lander*, Mr. Harry Eversfield; *Verity*, Mr. J. Graham; *Bailiff*, Mr. A. Phillips; *Mrs. Brett*, Miss Leslie Greenwood; *Miss Diction*, Miss Helen Ferrers; *Lydia Winlock*, Miss Dora de Winton; *Clarke*, Miss Annie Goward; *Queenie Dimple*, Miss Daisy Bryer; *Nettie Merrydue*, Miss May Edouin. An afternoon performance.

JULY.

1. Madame Rejane began, at the **Garrick Theatre**, a short season, during which she produced **MA COUSINE** and **MADAME SANS-GENE**.

2. TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA. **Daly's**. Cast: *The Duke of Milan*, Mr. George Clarke; *Proteus*, Mr. Frank Worthing; *Valentine*, Mr. John Craig; *Sir Thurio*, Mr. Sidney Herbert; *Sir Eglamour*, Mr. Gerald Maxwell; *Antonio*, Mr. Edwin Varrey; *Panthino*, Mr. Charles Leclercq; *Launce*, Mr. James Lewis; *Speed*, Mr. Herbert Gresham; *Host*, Mr. Tyrone Power; *The First Outlaw*, Mr. Hobart Bosworth; *Second Outlaw*, Mr. Thomas Bridgland; *Third Outlaw*, Mr. Campbell Gollan; *Sylvia*, Miss Maxine Elliot; *Lucetta*, Miss Sybil Carlisle; *Ursula*, Miss Mallon; *Julia*, Miss Ada Rehan.

4. **SAM'L OF POSEN**: Comedy Drama in Four Acts, by George H. Jessop. **Gaiety**. An afternoon performance. Cast: *Samuel Plastrick*, Mr. M. B. Curtis; *Mr. Winslow*, Mr. Colin Coop; *Frank Bronson*, Mr. Henry Vibart; *Jack Cheviot*, Mr. Sidney Brough; *Cuthbert Fitzurse*, Mr. Lawrance D'Orsay; *Uncle Goldstein*, Mr. Julian Cross; *Conn Quinn*, Mr. Richard Purdon; *Henry Dentatus Brown*, Mr. Robb Harwood; *Snowball*, Mr. W. Edwards; *Mademoiselle Celeste*, Miss Albena De Mer; *Rebecca*, Miss Mary Jocelyn; *Gladys*, Miss Constance Collier; *Mrs. Mulchay*, Miss Kate Kearney; *Ellen*, Miss Kate Cutler.

8. **FLIGHT FOR LIFE**: Drama in Four Acts, by F. A. Scudamore (originally produced under the title of "Our El Dorado," at the Opera House, Northampton, 6th August 1894, and played under that name at the Pavilion, London, the following week). **Surrey**.

9. **A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM**. **Daly's**. Cast: *Theseus*, Mr. George Clarke; *Egeus*, Mr. Tyrone Power; *Demetrius*, Mr. Frank Worthing; *Lysander*, Mr. John Craig; *Philstrate*, Mr. Hobart Bosworth; *Quince*, Mr. Charles Leclercq; *Snug*, Mr. Herbert Gresham; *Bottom*, Mr. James Lewis; *Flute*, Mr. Sidney Herbert; *Snout*, Mr. William Sampson; *Starveling*, Mr. Thomas Bridgland; *Hippolyta*, Miss Leontine; *Hermia*, Miss Maxine Elliot; *Oberon*, Miss Sybil Carlisle; *Titania*, Miss Percy Haswell; *A Fairy*, Miss Sofia Hoffman; *Puck, or Robin Goodfellow*, Miss Lillian Swain; *Helena*, Miss Ada Rehan.

15. **A LONDON MYSTERY**: Drama in Four Acts, by William Bourne. **Pavilion**.

15. **LOVE AND WAR**: Comic Opera in Three Acts, by Lawrence Olde and Basil Gotto; Music by Evan Kreffe (originally produced at the Theatre Royal, Portsmouth, 17th June 1895). **Elephant and Castle**. Cast: *Admiral Hornblower*, Mr. Harry Halley; *The Prince de St. Bris*, Mr. Wyndham Guise; *Col. Sir Everett Lascelles*, Mr. Walter

Ashley; *Captain Sinclair Lascelles*, Mr. J. Coates; *Vicomte Rigaud*, Mr. L. Wensley; *Phelim O'Tiger*, Mr. Dan Fitzgerald; *Bottle Bill*, Mr. Hampton Gordon; *Lady Lascelles*, Miss Sophie Harriss; *Jessie Hornblower*, Miss Josephine Findlay; *The Princesse de St. Bris*, Miss Pierina Amella; *Maraquita*, Miss Nellie Cozens; *Fanchette*, Miss Susie Nainby; *Mrs. Jenkins*, Miss Dora Birkett; *Kitty*, Miss Edith Hunter.

16. AFTER THE BALL: Operetta, by F. Kinsey Peile. **St. James's.** Afternoon performance for a Charity. Cast: *Mrs. Cyprian Smith*, Miss Marie Halton; *Mr. Cyprian Smith*, Mr. F. Kinsey Peile. Also **OUR TOYS:** An Extravaganza, by W. Yardley.

20. A HOUSE OF LIES: Drama in Four Acts, by Charles Hannan. **Lyric**, Hammersmith. Cast: *Sir Sidney Lee*, Mr. J. R. Crauford; *Lady Lee*, Miss Alice Ingram; *Eric Lee*, Mr. Charles Dalton; *Bertie Lee*, Mr. Lennox Pawle; *Eveleen Lee*, Miss Edie Forster; *Edward Armstrong*, Mr. Charles Vane; *Madame Lorraine*, Miss Grace Warner; *Mr. Edgworth*, Mr. F. Lomnitz; *Jean*, Mr. L. Lavater; *Paul Gautier*, Mr. Charles Warner.—Preceded by **DORA.** Cast: *Farmer Allen*, Mr. Charles Warner; *Will Allen*, Mr. Charles Vane; *Luke Bloomfield*, Mr. Charles Dalton; *Dora*, Miss Grace Warner; *Mary Morrison*, Miss Leah Marlborough; *Willy*, Miss Foster.

23. TWICE FOOLED: A Comedietta in One Act, by "Lamda Mu." An afternoon performance. **Gaiety.** Cast: *Mrs. Parsons Green*, Miss Phyllis Broughton; *Mr. Parsons Green*, Mr. George Mudie; *Penn Colomb, Esq.*, Mr. Eric Lewis; *Nina*, Miss Marie Halton.

27. QWONG HI: A Farcical Comedy, by Fenton Mackay. Revival at the **Avenue.** Cast: *Qwong Hi*, Mr. Willie Edouin; *Frank Brett*, Mr. Oswald Yorke; *Fred Earle*, Mr. Forbes Dawson; *Captain Lander*, Mr. W. F. Hawtrey; *Roy Lander*, Mr. Kenneth Douglass; *Verity*, Mr. Ernest Cosham; *Bailiff*, Mr. Forrester; *Mrs. Brett*, Miss Helen Ferrers; *Miss Diction*, Miss Beatrice Day; *Lydia Winlock*, Miss Florence

Fordyce; *Clarke*, Miss Lilian Millward; *Queenie Dimple*, Miss Daisy Bryer; *Nettie Merrydue*, Miss May Edouin. Withdrawn 17th August.

29. IN AN ATTIC: A Play in One Act, by Wilton Jones. Revival at the **Trafalgar**. Cast: *Arthur Clarges*, Mr. Guy Brandon; *Joe Dixon*, Mr. Cecil Ramsey; *Rosalind*, Miss Mary Lind.

29. NANCY AND COMPANY: Farcical Comedy, by Augustin Daly, based on a German piece. Revival at **Daly's**. Cast: *Mr. Ebenezer Griffing*, Mr. James Lewis; *Kiefe O'Kiefe, Esq.*, Mr. Frank Worthing; *Captain Paul Renseller*, Mr. Sidney Herbert; *Young Mr. Sikes Stockslow*, Mr. Herbert Gresham; *Julius*, Mr. William Sampson; *Taffy Brasher*, Mr. Hobart Bosworth; *Miss Huldah Dangery*, Mrs. G. H. Gilbert; *Oriana*, Miss Maxine Elliot; *Daisy Griffing*, Miss Percy Haswell; *Betsy*, Miss Helen Bryant; *Nancy Brasher*, Miss Ada Rehan.

29. THE HONOUR OF THE HOUSE: Drama in Five Acts, by H. H. Lewis. **Pavilion**. (Mr. C. W. Somerset as *Sebastian Ferrara*.)

29. VENGEANCE IS THINE: Drama in Five Acts, by John Mills. **Britannia**.

AUGUST.

3. SAVED FROM THE SEA: A Melodrama in Four Acts, by Arthur Shirley and Benjamin Landeck. **Princess's**. Cast: *Dan Ellington*, Mr. Charles Glenney; *Jim Weaver*, Mr. Austin Melford; *Peter Scalcher*, Mr. Bassett Roe; *Richard Fenton*, Mr. Frank Harding; *Billy Snooks*, Mr. Lionel Rignold; *Jenkins*, Mr. Lennox Pawle; *Jack*, Miss Gladys White; *Inspector Jennings*, Mr. George Claremont; *Chaplain*, Mr. George Yates; *Head Warder*, Mr. Freeman; *Second Warder*, Mr. Jameson; *Nancy Ellington*, Miss Beaumont Collins; *Mrs. Blake*, Miss Harriet Clifton; *Polly Blake*, Miss Fanny Selby.

5. THE WORLD'S VERDICT: A Drama in Five Acts, by Arthur Jefferson. **Surrey.**

8. ALL ABROAD: A Musical Farce in Two Acts, by Owen Hall and James T. Tanner; Lyrics by W. H. Risque; Music by Frederick Rosse. **Criterion.** Cast: *Mr. Bowles*, Mr. Charles E. Stevens; *Mr. Beaver*, Mr. Horace Mills; *Baron Fontenay*, Mr. H. De Lange; *Ernest*, Mr. John Coates; *Maurice Meurice*, Mr. C. P. Little; *Capshaw*, Mr. Lionel Rae; *Skeggs*, Mr. G. Carroll; *Gendarme*, Mr. Cecil Frere; *Adolphe*, Mr. L. Johnson; *Tom Eltham*, Mr. R. Lister; *Reggie Andale*, Mr. C. Mills; *Connie*, Miss Kate Cutler; *Blanche Leonide*, Miss Amella; *Chloe Feltop*, Miss Nellie Thorne; *May Astor*, Miss Lena Brophrey; *Madame Montesquieu*, Miss Ada Reeve. Withdrawn 2nd November. Revived at **Court**, 2nd January 1896.

19. A YOUNGSTER'S ADVENTURE: Sketch in One Act, by John S. Clarke. **Strand.** Cast: *Kit Curtis*, Mr. Wilfred Clarke; *Ellen*, Miss Nancy Noel; *Lady Lyster*, Miss Muriel Wylford; *Beckey*, Miss Caroline Ewell.—Also **NEW YORK DIVORCE:** A Farce in Three Acts, adapted from the French. Cast: *Paul Roach*, Mr. Wilfred Clarke; *Oliver Goldcoyne*, Mr. Arthur Wood; *Owen Cuttaway*, Mr. Arthur Helmore; *Peter Clincher*, Mr. Oswald Yorke; *Cæsar Smash*, Mr. Rankin Duval; *Selena Roach*, Miss Muriel Wylford; *Maud Eveltry*, Miss Nancy Noel; *Honor Racket*, Miss Marie Hudspeth. Withdrawn 16th September.

19. A WOMAN'S VICTORY: Drama in Five Acts, by W. A. Brabner. **Pavilion.**

19. CAMILLE. Revival at the **Grand.** Cast: *Armand Duval*, Mr. Ernest Leicester; *M. Duval*, Mr. W. Farren, Jun.; *Gaston Rieux*, Mr. Thomas Kingston; *Comte de Varville*, Mr. Luigi Lablache; *Gustave*, Mr. George Humphery; *Doctor*, Mr. Graham Goring; *Sans Gaudens*, Mr. Herbert Grimwood; *Arthur*, Mr. G. Merrilees; *Messenger*, Mr. W. C. Postance; *Footman*, Mr. Thomas Courtice; *Servant*, Mr. Pollak; *Madame Prudence*, Miss Alexes Leighton; *Nanine*, Miss Lilian Kingston;

Nickette, Miss Winifred Fraser; *Olympe*, Miss Emmerson; *Marguerite Gautier*, Miss Olga Nethersole.

19. THE NEW BARMAID: Up-to-date Musical Play in Two Acts, by Frederick Boarger and W. E. Sprange, Music by John Crook (produced on 1st July 1895 at the Opera House, Southport). **Metropole**, Camberwell. Cast: *Captain Lovebury*, Mr. Wilfred Howard; *Lieutenant Bradley*, Mr. V. M. Seymour; *Colonel Claymore*, Mr. C. Wilford; *Bertie White*, Mr. Joseph B. Montague; *Bonsor*, Mr. H. Conyers; *Gussie*, Mr. Michael Dure; *Inspector Hart*, Mr. F. J. Walton; *Club Porter*, Mr. Harry Bishop; *William White*, Mr. A. Alexander; *Lady Moulton*, Miss Florence Lynn; *Dora*, Miss Julia Kent; *Mabel*, Miss M. Johnson; *Kitty*, Miss Elsie Johnson; *Tommy*, Miss Edith Denton; *Johnny*, Miss Ethel Tinsley; *Florrie*, Miss Lily Johnson; *Effie*, Miss Ada Peppiatte; *Lily*, Miss Gertrude Thomas; *Maud*, Miss E. St. Louin; *Elsie*, Miss Josephine Young; *Alice*, Miss Estelle Dudley; *Gertie*, Miss Rosie Claire; *Brenda South*, Miss Ida St. George; *Ethel Joy*, Miss Amy Augarde.

31. THE SWORDSMAN'S DAUGHTER: A Drama in Four Acts, by Brandon Thomas and Clement Scott, adapted from *Le Maître d'Armes*, by Jules Mary and Georges Grisier. **Adelphi**. Cast: *Vibrac*, Mr. William Terriss; *Jean Olgan*, Mr. Charles Fulton; *Baron de Chantoisel*, Mr. Harry Nichols; *Dr. Dubarry*, Mr. J. R. Crauford; *Tommy Wilkins*, Mr. Julian Cross; *Jacquot Breton*, Mr. Richard Purdon; *Judge Melvil*, Mr. G. R. Foss; *Count Henri de Rochfiere*, Mr. W. L. Abingdon; *Lieutenant Leverdier*, Mr. Vincent Sternroyd; *Marescot*, Mr. Richard Brennand; *Leclair*, Mr. Edwin Rorke; *Maurice*, Mr. Paul Berton; *San Melito*, Mr. A. W. Fitzgerald; *Cartel*, Mr. Webb Darleigh; *Prevot*, Mr. Caleb Porter; *Abbe Roland*, Mr. J. S. Blythe; *Madeleine*, Miss Milward; *Therese*, Miss Vane Featherstone; *Mrs. Wilkins*, Miss Marriott; *Madame Breton*, Miss Kate Kearney; *Lisette*, Mrs. E. H. Brooke; *Suzanne*, Miss Mary Allestre; *Countess de Floriel*, Miss Madge Leighton. Withdrawn 30th November.

SEPTEMBER.

2. ALABAMA: A Play in Four Acts, by Augustus Thomas, originally produced in America. **Garrick.** Cast: *Colonel Preston*, Mr. James Fernandez; *Carey Preston*, Miss Agnes Miller; *Harry Preston*, Mr. E. S. Willard; *Mrs. Page*, Miss Marion Terry; *Lathrop Page*, Mr. Cecil Crofton; *Raymond Page*, Mr. Bassett Roe; *Colonel Moberley*, Mr. John Mason; *Atalanta Moberley*, Miss Nannie Craddock; *Mrs. Stockton*, Miss Keith Wakeman; *Mr. Armstrong*, Mr. W. T. Lovell; *Squire Tucker*, Mr. F. H. Tyler; *Decatur*, Mr. H. Cane. Withdrawn 12th October.

3. THE PRIVATE SECRETARY. Farcical Comedy. Revival at the **Avenue.** Cast: *Mr. Marsland*, Mr. Nicol Pentland; *Harry Marsland*, Mr. J. L. Mackay; *Mr. Cattermole*, Mr. W. F. Hawtrey; *Douglas Cattermole*, Mr. Charles Hawtrey; *The Rev. Robert Spalding*, Mr. Willis Searle; *Mr. Sidney Gibson*, Mr. St. John Hamund; *John*, Mr. W. H. Taylor; *Knox*, Mr. George Spencer; *Gardener*, Mr. Mackenzie; *Edith Marsland*, Miss Ada Mellon; *Eva Webster*, Miss Evelyn Harrison; *Mrs. Stead*, Mrs. H. Leigh; *Miss Ashford*, Miss Caroline Elton.

7. THE CHILI WIDOW: A Comedy in Three Acts, adapted by Arthur Bouchier and Alfred Sutro, from "M. Le Directeur," by Alexander Bisson and Fabrice Carré. **Royalty.** Cast: *Sir Reginald Delamere, Bart.*, Mr. Arthur Bouchier; *Leslie Lavender*, Mr. Cosmo Stuart; *Duckworth Crabbe*, Mr. W. Blakeley; *Frederick Martindale*, Mr. Welton Dale; *Mathison Crawley*, Mr. Frank Lindo; *Cecil Fielding*, Mr. Charles Troode; *Patrick O'Dwyer, M.P.*, Mr. Ernest Hendrie; *Macpherson*, Mr. Mark Kinghorne; *Alfred Gentle*, Mr. A. Bromley Davenport; *William*, Mr. Arthur Armstrong; *Boy*, Mr. S. Alexander; *Mrs. Jeffreys*, Miss Sophie Larkin; *Gladys de la Casa y Gualés*, Miss Violet Vanbrugh; *Honor Bliss*, Miss Kate Phillips. Still running.

9. THE WINNING HAND: Drama in Five Acts, by George Conquest and St. Aubyn Miller. **Surrey.**

9. DR. AND MRS. NEILL: Play in Three Acts, by Clo Graves. **Grand.** Cast: *Dr. Neill*, M.D. Edin., F.R.S., Mr. Brandon Thomas; *Renfrew Plunkett*, Q.C., Mr. E. W. Gardiner; *Edward Valancy*, Mr. Oscar Adye; *Dr. Saunders*, Mr. P. Gromer; *Ellis*, Mr. C. Montague; *Footman*, Mr. Stanley Preston; *Lady Carthew*, Miss Beatrice Lamb; *Mrs. Neill*, Miss Kate Rorke.

9. BUTTERCUP AND DAISY: Musical Comedy in Three Acts, by George Dance (originally produced at the Court Theatre, Liverpool, 17th June 1895). **Royal**, Kilburn. Cast: *Theodore Goodwin*, Mr. George Houghten; *Mrs. Goodwin*, Miss Deleval; *Kitty*, Miss Barry Eldon; *Flo*, Miss Marie Dainton; *Ethel*, Miss Phoebe Mercer; *Captain Cranbourne*, Mr. George Sinclair; *Percy Dawson*, Mr. Harold Eden; *David Tompkinson*, Mr. Edmund Page; *Roberts*, Mr. George Barran; *Liza Ellen*, Miss Louie Freear; *Dick Drake*, Mr. T. P. Haynes; *Bessie*, Miss Jennie Dawson; *Josiah Snigg*, Mr. A. Watts; *Cecil Howard*, Mr. Harry Walters.

10. BOGEY: A Play in Three Acts, by H. V. Esmond. **St. James's.** Cast: *Uncle Archie Buttanshaw*, Mr. H. V. Esmond; *Joseph Gradden*, Mr. Fred Everill; *Jamie Mac-lachlan*, Mr. W. G. Elliot; *John Tiddy*, Mr. Philip Cunningham; *Noah Emens*, Mr. Gaston Mervale; *Kennedy*, Mr. W. R. Staveley; *Marion Buttanshaw*, Miss Ethel Matthews; *Fairy Buttanshaw*, Miss Eva Moore; *Maid*, Miss Lovell; *Miss Minden*, Miss Pattie Bell. Withdrawn 21st September.

16. IN A LOCKET: Farcical Comedy in Three Acts, by Harry and Edward Paulton. **Strand.** Cast: *General Greville*, Mr. Clinton Baddeley; *Garnet Greville*, Mr. Harold Child; *Andrew Mallock*, Mr. Laurence Cautley; *Alfred Bonner*, Mr. Scott Buist; *Marler*, Mr. Frank M. Wood; *Comyns*, Mr. James Welch; *Middleton Simpkin*, Mr. Harry Paulton; *Judith Simpkin*, Miss Annie Hill; *Elaine Ferris*, Miss Gladys Evelyn; *Susan*, Miss Julia Warden; *Marian*, Miss Amy Elstob; *Cicely*, Miss Alice de Winton.—Preceded by **A HANDSOME HUSBAND.** Cast: *Mr. Henry Wyndham*, Mr. James

Welch ; *Mr. Henry Fitzherbert*, Mr. Clinton Baddeley ; *Laura Wyndham*, Miss Agnes Paulton ; *Amelia*, Miss Ida Walland ; *Sophia Melford*, Miss Amy Elstob ; *Jane*, Miss Winifred Wood. Withdrawn 30th October.

16. TOMMY ATKINS: Drama in Four Acts, by Arthur Shirley and Benjamin Landeck. **Pavilion.** Cast : *Harold Wilson*, Mr. Murray Carson ; *Colonel Hardwick*, Mr. G. L. Eveson ; *Captain Richard Maitland*, Mr. A. C. Lilley ; *Captain Robert Sparrow*, Mr. Royston Keith ; *Sergeant Paddy Molloy*, Mr. Martin Adeson ; *Private Mason*, Mr. G. W. Cockburn ; *Private Harris*, Mr. Herbert Hamilton ; *Ebenezer Skindle*, Mr. Fred Winn ; *Stephen Raymond*, Mr. J. Nelson Ramsey ; *Thomas Trotman*, Mr. George Antley ; *Sir Simon Redgrave, J.P.*, Mr. Bedford ; *Perkins*, Mr. Norton Wilson ; *Arab Chief*, Mr. C. Ferry ; *Jack*, Mr. Bond ; *Ruth*, Miss Essex Dane ; *Elsie Wilson*, Miss Rose Pendennis ; *Margaret Maitlands*, Miss Rachel de Solla ; *Kate Perkins*, Miss Montelli ; *Martha*, Miss Helen Rean ; *Rose Selwyn*, Miss Elsie Arnauld.

19. CHEER, BOYS, CHEER: A Drama in Five Acts, by Sir Augustus Harris, Cecil Raleigh, and Henry Hamilton. **Drury Lane.** Cast : *Lady Hilyard*, Miss Fanny Brough ; *Lady Ughtred Kesteven*, Mrs. Raleigh ; *Kitty Parker*, Miss Pattie Browne ; *Mrs. Verity*, Miss Marie D'Altra ; *Mrs. Chomondeley*, Miss Fannie Ward ; *Blanche Lindsey*, Miss Eleanor Calhoun ; *The Marquis of Chepstow*, Mr. Henry Neville ; *Lord Archibald Kesteven*, Mr. Sidney Howard ; *George Hilyard*, Mr. Hamilton Revelle ; *Reginald Fitzdavis*, Mr. Charles Dalton ; *Wolff Meikstein*, Mr. Lionel Rignold ; *Oliver C. Brown*, Mr. George Giddens ; *Cyrus Trueman*, Mr. Austin Melford ; *The Rev. Mr. Nugent*, Mr. William Rignold ; *Forbes*, Mr. MacVicars ; *John Knight*, Mr. Tripp Edgar ; *Miss Planquet*, Miss Mowbrey ; *Miss Vernon*, Miss Kate Ruskin ; *Miss Henshaw*, Miss Edie Farquhar ; *Miss Fitzwilliam*, Miss Gertrude Green ; *Mrs. Bradshaw*, Miss Lydia Rachel ; *Mrs. Bentley*, Miss Amy Abbott ; *Hotel Clerk*, Mr. De Groot ; *Barmaid*, Miss Maud Francis ; *Corporal Thompson*, Mr. R. A. Lyons ; *Sergeant Bucklaw*, Mr. Frank Damer ; *Gibbens*, Mr. Alfred

Balfour; *Warder*, Mr. Arthur Henden; *Jackson*, Mr. C. Danvers; *Policeman*, Mr. Alfred Robert; *Porter*, Mr. James Francis; *Mr. Gordon Lee*, Mr. Howard Russell; *Mr. Philip Lee*, Mr. A. Trevor; *Professor Schwinter*, Mr. Herbert Charante; *Signor Patrogilli*, Mr. Court; *Sir Hilary Fanshaw*, Mr. Robert. Transferred to the Olympic, 19th December. Still running.

21. ROMEO AND JULIET. Revival at the Lyceum. Cast: *Prince Escalus*, Mr. Joseph Carne; *Paris*, Mr. Arthur Grenville; *Montague*, Mr. Alfred Brydone; *Capulet*, Mr. George Warde; *Romeo*, Mr. Forbes Robertson; *Mercutio*, Mr. Coghlan; *Benvolio*, Mr. Frank Gilmore; *Tybalt*, Mr. Will Dennis; *Friar Lawrence*, Mr. Nutcombe Gould; *Friar John*, Mr. Charles E. Senior; *Balthazar*, Mr. T. P. Williamson; *Sampson*, Mr. Lennox Pawle; *Gregory*, Mr. George Canninge; *Peter*, Mr. John Willes; *Abram*, Mr. Charles Lloyd; *An Apothecary*, Mr. Ian Robertson; *Lady Montague*, Miss Faber; *Lady Capulet*, Mrs. Edward Saker; *Juliet*, Mrs. Patrick Campbell; *Nurse*, Miss Dolores Drummond. Withdrawn 21st December.

25. HARMONY: Domestic Drama in One Act, by Henry Arthur Jones (originally produced, 13th August 1879, at the Grand Theatre, Leeds). **Royalty.** Cast: *Michael Kursman*, Mr. Mark Kinghorne; *Frank Seaton*, Mr. Arthur Armstrong; *Muggins*, Mr. Charles Troode; *Jenny*, Miss Ettie Williams.

26. HER ADVOCATE: Play in Three Acts, by Walter Frith. **Duke of York's.** Cast: *George Abinger, Q.C.*, Mr. Charles Cartwright; *Douglas Ferraby, Esq.*, Mr. Oswald Yorke; *John Melcombe, Esq.*, Mr. Holmes Gore; *Michael Dennis, Esq.*, Mr. J. H. Barnes; *Dr. Marshall*, Mr. C. W. Somerset; *Welsby*, Mr. Cecil Ramsey; *Sergeant Black*, Mr. Willie Young; *The Hon. Mr. Justice Vesey*, Mr. Frederick Volpe; *Flack*, Mr. Alfred Phillips; *Marker*, Mr. D. Norman; *Mr. Bodmin*, Mr. S. Trevor; *Mr. Maclean*, Mr. A. H. Lyons; *Mr. Blackstone, Q.C.*, Mr. Lyston Lyle; *The High Sheriff*, Mr. R. Vaughan; *The Chaplain*, Mr. P. J. Hillier; *The Judge's*

Marshal, Mr. F. W. Bedells; *Foreman of the Jury*, Mr. A. Collins; *Mrs. Field*, Miss Gertrude Kingston; *Mrs. Melcombe*, Miss Henrietta Watson; *Blanche Ferraby*, Miss Lena Ashwell; *Female Warder*, Miss Major. Withdrawn 30th November.

OCTOBER.

5. THE WRONG ADDRESS: Duologue, Anonymous. **Duke of York's.** Cast: *The Hon. John Brampton*, Mr. Oswald Yorke; *Mrs. Alfred Franklin*, Miss Henrietta Watson.

10. POOR MR. POTTON: Farce in Three Acts, by Clarence Hamlyn and H. M. Paull. **Vaudeville.** Cast: *Willoughby Potton*, Mr. Weedon Grossmith; *Dick Harrowby*, Mr. Wilfred Draycott; *Professor Schmidt*, Mr. John Beauchamp; *Tom Dashwood*, Mr. Tom Terriss; *Mr. Dawson*, Mr. F. Volpe; *Mr. Batt*, Mr. Sydney Warden; *Mr. Kidby*, Mr. F. Saker; *Mrs. Dashwood*, Miss Gladys Homfrey; *Mrs. Potton*, Miss F. Haydon; *Catherine Dashwood*, Miss May Palfrey; *Pauline Dashwood*, Miss Annie Chippendale; *Barford*, Miss A. Dale; *Annie*, Miss Alice Beet. Withdrawn 2nd December.

14. THE SCHOOL-GIRL: Comedy, by George Manchester, with music by Albert Maurice. **Standard.** Cast: *Professor Gainsbury*, Mr. C. A. Russell; *Cyril Beresford*, Mr. Eric Ford; *Jack Gadsden*, Mr. George M. Slater; *Timothy O'Flanagan*, Mr. William Holles; *Lord Frederick Fitzjuggins*, Mr. Sidney Turner; *Algy Clayton*, Mr. Harry L. Wrenn; *Policeman*, Mr. H. Warren; *Montmorency*, Mr. G. Sidney; *Cheeks*, Miss Louie Walters; *Mrs. Allason*, Miss Agnes Hewitt; *Madge Gainsbury*, Miss Ada Walgrave; *Bella Gadsden*, Miss Maud Noel; *Susannah St. Aubyn*, Miss Maggie Hunt; *Georgina Godolphin*, Miss Nannie Goldman; *Amintha Armitage*, Miss Lottie Siegenberg; *Phillipa Plantagenet*, Miss Ethel Grace; *Frances Fitzwilliam*, Miss Connie Nelson; *Hyacinth Hamilton*, Miss Grace Kelly; *Olga Oliphant*, Miss Mary Hulton; *Florence Fitzherbert*, Miss Jenny Maxwell; *Beatrice Bannerman*, Miss Madge Lester; *Alice Argyll*, Miss Ethel

Hardacre; *Mabel Marmaduke*, Miss Minnie Percival; *Maggie Macgregor*, Miss Edith Singlehurst; *Louisa Allason* (*Little Miss Loo*), Miss Minnie Palmer.

14. A LION'S HEART: a Melodrama in a Prologue and Five Acts, by Arthur Shirley and Benjamin Landeck (originally produced at the Parkhurst Theatre in July 1892, now reproduced at the **Princess's**). Cast (Prologue): *Pierre Rizardo*, Mr. Charles Glenney; *Louise*, Miss Beaumont Collins; *Gaspard Dobré*, Mr. William H. Day; *Timothy Puggs*, Mr. Leslie Thompson; *Ring Master*, Mr. Charles Baldwin; *Helene*, Miss Kate E. Leslie. (Drama), *Pierre Rizardo*, Mr. Charles Glenney; *Colonel Robert de Villefort*, Mr. E. Rochelle; *Gaspard Dobré*, Mr. William H. Day; *Dick Lorimore*, Mr. George H. Harker; *Jack Bealby*, Mr. Maitland Marler; *Dobson*, Mr. Frank Harding; *Daddy Mason*, Mr. George Yates; *Captain Gavarnie*, Mr. A. J. Byde; *Jean Loraine*, Mr. George Claremont; *Charlot*, Mr. Charles Baldwin; *Pitou*, Mr. Leslie Thompson; *Marion Lorimore*, Miss Beaumont Collins; *Gilbert*, Miss Josephine Woodin; *Bessie Lorimore*, Miss Fannie Selby; *Sister Gertrude*, Miss Harriet Clifton; *Madame Le Coeminant*, Miss Loveridge; *Louise*, Miss Alice Vitu.

16. THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT: Comedy in Three Acts, by Arthur W. Pinero. **Comedy.** Cast: *Mrs. Emptage*, Miss Henrietta Lindley; *Claude Emptage*, Mr. Aubrey Fitzgerald; *Justina Emptage*, Miss Esme Beringer; *Theophila Fraser*, Miss Winifred Emery; *Sir Fletcher Portwood, M.P.*, Mr. Cyril Maude; *Mrs. Cloys*, Miss Rose Leclercq; *The Right Rev. Antony Cloys, D.D., Bishop of St. Olpherts*, Mr. Ernest Cosham; *Alexander Fraser*, Mr. J. G. Grahame; *John Allingham*, Mr. Leonard Boyne; *Denzil Shafio*, Mr. J. W. Pigott; *Peter Elphick*, Mr. Stuart Champion; *Horton*, Mr. Mules Browne; *Quaife*, Mr. John Byron; *Olive Allingham*, Miss Lily Hanbury; *Mrs. Quinton Twelves*, Miss Eva Williams. Withdrawn 27th December.

19. THE RISE OF DICK HALWARD: Play in Three Acts, by Jerome K. Jerome. **Garrick.** Cast: *Dr. Hakward*, Mr. F. H. Tyler; *Dick Halward*, Mr. E. S. Willard;

Dan Graham, Mr. J. H. Barnes; *Reggie Philbrick*, Mr. H. V. Esmond; *Mr. Carruthers*, Mr. H. Cane; *Mrs. Carruthers*, Miss Fanny Coleman; *Madge*, Miss Marion Terry; *Enid Elphick*, Miss Annie Hughes; *Valentine Carvalho*, Mr. Bassett Roe; *Henry Duval*, Mr. W. T. Lovell; *Pamela*, Miss Winifred Fraser; *Servant*, Miss Violet Almbruster. Withdrawn 9th November.

28. THE BRIC-A-BRAC WILL: Comic Opera in Three Acts. Libretto by S. J. Adair Fitz-Gerald and Hugh Moss; Lyrics by S. J. Adair Fitz-Gerald; Music by Emilio Pizzi. Cast: *Duke Erico Lantazaro*, Mr. Charles Conyers; *Antonio*, Mr. Frank Wyatt; *Paolo*, Mr. Harrison Brockbank; *The Doge of Venice*, Mr. J. J. Dallas; *Barnaba*, Mr. E. W. Royce; *Roberto*, Mr. Frank H. Celli; *Beppo*, Mr. Stanley Patterson; *Mudillo*, Mr. Watty Brunton, jun.; *A Watchman*, Mr. Horn Conyers; *Sylvia*, Miss Kate Drew (eventually Miss Florence St. John); *Chiara*, Miss Susie Vaughan; *Lisette*, Miss Fanny Marriott. Withdrawn 28th December.

28. A TALE OF THE THAMES: Drama in Four Acts, by George Conquest and Arthur Shirley. **Surrey.**

30. TRILBY: a Dramatic Version, by Paul M. Potter, of George Du Maurier's Novel (originally produced—in England—at the Theatre Royal, Manchester, on 7th September, now reproduced at the **Haymarket**). Cast: *Svengali*, Mr. Beer-bohm Tree; *Talbot Wynne*, Mr. Edmund Maurice; *Alexander M'Alister*, Mr. Lionel Brough; *William Bagot*, Mr. Patrick Evans (eventually Mr. Henry V. Esmond); *Gecko*, Mr. C. M. Hallard; *Zouzou*, Mr. Herbert Ross; *Dodor*, Mr. Gerald Du Maurier; *Oliver*, Mr. Berte Thomas; *Lorinier*, Mr. Guyer Mackay; *The Rev. Thomas Bagot*, Mr. Charles Allan; *Manager Kaw*, Mr. Holman Clark; *Trilby O'Ferrall*, Miss Dorothea Baird; *Mrs. Bagot*, Miss Frances Ivor; *Madame Vinard*, Miss Rosina Filippi. Still running.

NOVEMBER.

1. THE LORD MAYOR: a "What you Will" in Three Acts, by W. E. Bradley, Harry and Edward A. Paulton.

Strand. Cast : *Sir Martin Marlow*, Mr. Harry Paulton ; *Martin Marlow, Junior*, Mr. Scott Buist ; *Miss Sabina Marlow*, Miss Gladys Evelyn ; *Miss Clarissa Marlow*, Miss Agnes Paulton, *The Hon. Richard Gratwick*, Mr. Harold Child ; *Lady Muriel Gratwick*, Miss Amy Elstob ; *Bristol*, Mr. James Welch ; *Professor Grimweed*, Mr. Laurence Irving ; *Cora*, Miss Alice de Winton ; *Alderman Robbins*, Mr. Clinton Baddeley ; *Alderman Harris*, Mr. E. Coventry ; *Henry H. Morgan*, Mr. Newman Maurice ; *Daniel B. Jackson*, Mr. Stanley Betjemann ; *Inspector Handford*, Mr. F. J. Waller ; *Gebel*, Mr. C. Leighton ; *Turner*, Mr. E. Wilson ; *Griffin*, Mr. C. Mordan. Withdrawn 5th November.

2. MRS. PONDERBURY'S PAST : a Farce in Three Acts, adapted by F. C. Burnand from Ernest Blum and Raoul Toché's *Madame Mongodin*. **Avenue.** Cast : *Matthew Ponderbury*, Mr. Charles Hawtrey ; *Mervin Thorp*, Mr. Cosmo Stuart ; *John Rumford*, Mr. J. L. Mackay ; *Hyacinth Grayling*, Mr. Willis Searle ; *Peter*, Mr. W. F. Hawtrey ; *Mrs. Ponderbury*, Miss Alma Stanley ; *Ethel Peniston*, Miss Ada Mallon ; *Susan*, Miss Evelyn Harrison ; *Countess de Mojeski*, Miss Lottie Venne. Still running.

5. THE SQUIRE OF DAMES : Comedy in Three Acts, adapted from *L'Ami des Femmes* (Alexandre Dumas fils) by R. C. Carton. **Criterion.** Cast : *Mr. Kilroy*, Mr. Charles Wyndham ; *Colonel Dennant*, Mr. Frank Fenton ; *Sir Douglas Thorburn*, Mr. Bernard Gould ; *Lord Eustace Chetland*, Mr. H. de Lange ; *Professor Dowle, F.R.S.*, Mr. Alfred Bishop ; *Barnes*, Mr. R. Lister ; *Servant*, Mr. C. Terric ; *Mrs. Doyle*, Miss Granville ; *Elsie*, Miss Beatrice Ferrar ; *Zoe Nuggetson*, Miss Fay Davis ; *Adelaide Dennant*, Miss Mary Moore. Still running.

6. THE INTERVIEW : A Comedietta, by T. G. Warren. **Garrick.** Cast : *Martin Grange*, Mr. W. T. Lovell ; *Natalie Morris*, Miss Keith Wakeman.—Preceding **THE PROFESSOR'S LOVE-STORY**, now revived.

11. THE RIVALS: Sheridan's Comedy, revived at the **Court**. Cast: *Sir Anthony Absolute*, Mr. William Farren; *Captain Absolute*, Mr. Sydney Brough; *Faulkland*, Mr. Charles Sugden; *Bob Acres*, Mr. Arthur Williams; *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*, Mr. Brandon Thomas; *Fag*, Mr. H. Nye Chart; *David*, Mr. W. Cheeseman; *Coachman*, Mr. W. H. Quinton; *Servant*, Mr. F. Lane; *Boy*, Mr. Chapman; *Lydia Languish*, Miss Nancy Noel; *Julia Melville*, Miss Violet Raye; *Lucy*, Miss Marie Hudspeth; *Mrs. Malaprop*, Mrs. John Wood. Withdrawn 21st December.

12. AN OLD GARDEN: A Play in One Act, by Hill Davies (originally produced at Brighton, now reproduced at **Terry's**). Cast: *Mildred Sanford*, Miss Mona Oram; *Rose Harmer*, Miss Doris Templeton; *David Brice*, Mr. W. J. Robertson; *Philip Melville*, Mr. John Buckstone.

13. MERRIFIELD'S GHOST: A One-Act Play, by H. M. Paull. **Vaudeville**. Cast: *Thomas Merrifield*, Mr. F. Volpe; *John Gordon*, Mr. Sydney Warden; *Will Gordon*, Mr. Wilfred Draycott; *Sylvia Merrifield*, Miss Kate Sergeantson.

15. GIDDY GALATEA: Musical Skit in One Act, by Henry Edlen; Music by Edward Jones. Cast: *Galatea Green*, Miss Minnie Thurgate; *Phidias Phixum*, Mr. Forbes Dawson; *Pygmalion Potts*, Mr. T. P. Haynes; *Daphne Potts*, Miss Annie Dovelley.

16. NANNIE: A Two-Act Comedy, by T. G. Warren. **Opera Comique** (now re-opened under the management of Miss Nellie Farren). Cast: *Nannie Geen*, Miss Emily Cudmore; *Jessie Geen*, Miss Emma Gwynne; *Rose Dadden*, Miss Stella Lee; *Eliza Boon*, Miss F. Montgomery; *Matthew Burge*, Mr. Edward Sass; *Sydney Wynne*, Mr. Oscar Adye; *David Geen*, Mr. J. G. Taylor.—Also **A MODEL TRILBY:** Burlesque in One Act, by C. H. Brookfield and W. Yardley; Music by Meyer Lutz. Cast: *Durien*, Mr. Eric Lewis; *Svengali*, Mr. Robb Harwood; *Taffy*, Mr. Farren Soutar; *The Laird*, Mr. C. P. Little; *Little Billee*, Mr. George Antley; *Jack*, Mr. Fred

Storey; *Thomas Bagot*, Mr. E. H. Kelly; *The Stranger*, Mr. E. J. Scott; *Zouzou*, Miss Millie Le Capelaine; *Dodor*, Miss May Romney; *Madame Vinard*, Miss Helen Vicary; *Mrs. Bagot*, Miss Mary Stuart; *Mimi*, Miss Eva Hamblen; *Musette*, Miss Greville Moore; *Trilby*, Miss Kate Cutler. "Nannie" withdrawn 6th December; "A Model Trilby" still running.

18. THE MANXMAN: A Play in Four Acts, adapted by Wilson Barrett from Hall Caine's novel, and anonymously revised. **Shaftesbury.** Cast: *Philip Christian*, Mr. Lewis Waller; *Pete Quilliam*, Mr. G. W. Cockburn; *Cæsar Cregeen*, Mr. James Fernandez; *Black Tom*, Mr. Henry Kemble; *Ross Christian*, Mr. C. H. E. Brookfield; *Sir Edward Brookland*, Mr. Hamilton Knight; *Mr. Farrant, Q.C.*, Mr. F. Percival Stevens; *Dr. Mylechreest*, Mr. George Hipposley; *Kelly*, Mr. Lesly Thomson; *Jemmy Lord*, Mr. H. Deane; *Inspector Ballure*, Mr. C. Goodhart; *Lady Brookland*, Mrs. Arthur Ayers; *Miss Cicely Cornwall*, Miss Christine Mayne; *Nancy*, Miss Kate Phillips; *Bella*, Miss Norbury; *Kate Cregeen*, Miss Florence West. Withdrawn November 30th.

23. THE DIVIDED WAY: A Play in Three Acts (originally produced at the Theatre Royal, Manchester, on 31st October, now reproduced at the **St. James's Theatre**). Cast: *General Humeden*, Mr. W. H. Vernon; *Gaunt Humeden*, Mr. George Alexander; *Jack Humeden*, Mr. Allan Aynesworth; *Jay Grist*, Mr. Herbert Waring; *Dr. Macgrath*, Mr. H. H. Vincent; *Mr. Swendal*, Mr. E. M. Robson; *Kelly*, Mr. Frank Dyall; *Phyllis Humeden*, Miss Violet Lyster; *Mrs. Kelly*, Miss Mouillot; *Lois*, Miss Evelyn Millard.—Also **THE MISOGYNIST**, originally produced at Manchester, on 25th October, as "The Woman Hater." Cast: *Mr. Corquodale*, Mr. George Alexander; *Charlie Denison*, Mr. Allan Aynesworth; *Royd*, Mr. H. H. Vincent; *Kitty Denison*, Miss Ellis Jeffreys. Withdrawn 14th December.

30. A DANGEROUS RUFFIAN: Farce in One Act, by W. D. Howells. **Avenue.** Cast: *Edward Roberts*, Mr. W. F. Hawtreys; *Wilks Campbell*, Mr. J. L. Mackay; *Mr.*

Bemis, Mr. W. Wyes; *Dr. Bemis, jun.*, Mr. E. Halfeld; *Mrs. Crashaw*, Miss Evelyn Harrison; *Bella*, Miss Clayton; *Mrs. Roberts*, Miss Florence Harrington.

DECEMBER.

2. **THE WOMAN IN BLACK**: A New Version of Wilton Jones's Drama, "Haunted Lives." **Standard**.

2. **ONE OF THE BRAVEST**: Musical Comedy-Drama. **Britannia**.

2. **THE BANDIT KING**: Drama in Five Acts, by J. H. Wallick. **Pavilion**.

2. **THE WATER BABES**: Operatic Extravaganza by E. W. Bowles, Music by Merton Clarke. **Parkhurst**.

3. **THE NEW BOY**: Revival at the **Vaudeville**.

4. **MR. VERSUS MRS**: An Incident, by Arthur Bouchier and Mountjoy. **Royalty**. Cast: *Mr. Robert Challenger*, Mr. Arthur Bouchier; *The Hon. Mrs. Featherleigh*, Miss Violet Vanbrugh. Afternoon performance for a Charity.

7. **MADAME**: An "Absurdity" in Three Acts, by James T. Tanner. **Opera Comique**. Cast: *Mr. Galleon*, Mr. Eric Lewis; *George Baxter*, Mr. Farren Soutar; *Denton Jones*, Mr. James G. Taylor; *Captain Charles Cameron*, Mr. Oscar Adye; *Monsieur Vivienne*, Mr. E. H. Kelly; *Charlemagne*, Mr. E. J. Scott; *Jorkins*, Mr. Horniman; *Inspector*, Mr. Culverwell; *Miss Baxter*, Miss Kate Tindall; *Edith Galleon*, Miss F. Montgomery; *Madame Vivienne*, Miss Helen Vicary; *Miss Godolphin*, Miss Emma Gwynne. Still running.

11. **KITTY CLIVE (ACTRESS)**: Comedy in One Act, by Frankfort Moore. **Royalty**. Cast: *Kitty Clive*, Miss Irene Vanbrugh; *Jack Bates*, Mr. Henry Vibart; *Landlord*, Mr. F. W. Permain.

16. **THE NEW HUSBAND**: Dialogue by Cotsford

Dick. **Haymarket.** (An afternoon performance.) Cast: *Mr. Heliotrope*, Mr. George Giddens; *Mrs. Heliotrope*, Miss Fanny Brough; *Servant*, Mr. Croxon.

21. ONE OF THE BEST: A Drama in Four Acts, by Seymour Hicks and George Edwardes. **Adelphi.** Cast: *Dudley Keppel*, Mr. William Terris; *Philip Ellsworth*, Mr. W. L. Abingdon; *Lieutenant-General Coventry*, Mr. Charles Fulton; *Sir Archibald McGregor, K.C.B., A.D.C.*, Mr. Edward Sass; *The Rev. Dr. Penrose*, Mr. Julian Cross; *M. Jules de Gruchy*, M. L. Delorme; *Private Jupp*, Mr. Harry Nicholls; *Sergeant Henessy*, Mr. A. W. Fitzgerald; *Corporal Smythe*, Mr. Walter; *Private (Hon.) Montessor*, Mr. Richard Brennand; *Private Ginger*, Mr. Cole; *Private Snipe*, Mr. Webb Darleigh; *Private White*, Mr. Herrick; *President of the Court*, Mr. Hubert Parker; *Jason Jupp*, Mr. H. Athol Forde; *Esther Coventry*, Miss Millward; *Mary Penrose*, Miss Edith Ostlere; *Kitty Spencer*, Miss Vane Featherstone; *Mrs. Spencer*, Miss Kate Kearney. Still running.

23. TOMMY ATKINS: A Drama in Four Acts, by Benjamin Landeck and Arthur Shirley (originally produced at the Pavilion Theatre, on 16th September, now reproduced at the **Duke of York's Theatre**). Cast: *Harold Wilson*, Mr. Charles Cartwright; *Stephen Raymond*, Mr. Lyston Lyle; *Ebenezer Skindle*, Mr. Lennox Pawle; *Captain Richard Maitland*, Mr. Edward O'Neill; *Captain Bob Sparrow*, Mr. Wilfred Forster; *Little Jack*, Miss Jessica Black; *Colour-Sergeant Paddy Molloy*, Mr. Richard Purdon; *Private Mason*, Mr. G. W. Cockburn; *Colonel Hardwick*, Mr. Pemberton Peach; *Perkins*, Mr. Langley Handford; *The Arab Sheikh*, Mr. Gomer May; *Tommy Trotman*, Mr. Harry Buss; *Private Harris*, Mr. Dalziel Heron; *Orderly*, Mr. W. Richards; *Surgeon*, Mr. Douglas Norman; *Villager*, Mr. Alfred Collins; *Ruth Raymond*, Miss Gertrude Kingston; *Elsie Wilson*, Miss Constance Collier; *Rose Selwyn*, Miss Clare Harford; *Margaret Maitland*, Miss Olliffe; *Kate Perkins*, Miss Naomi Neilson; *Martha*, Miss Minnie Major. Withdrawn 31st December.

26. CINDERELLA: Pantomime by Augustus Harris, Cecil Raleigh, and Arthur Sturgess. **Drury Lane.** Cast: *The Prince*, Miss Ada Blanche; *Cinderella*, Miss Isa Bowman; *Dandini*, Miss Alexandra Dagmar; *The Baron*, Mr. Herbert Campbell; *The Baroness*, Mr. Dan Leno; *The Tutor*, Mr. Lionel Rignold; *Two Bailiff's Officers*, The Griffiths Brothers; *Angelina*, Miss Sophie Larkin; *Clorinda*, Miss Emily Miller; *The Fairy Godmother*, Miss Lily Harold; *French Ambassador*, Miss Marguerite Cornille; *The Lord Chamberlain*, Miss Maggie Ripley; *The Demon*, Miss L. Comyns; *King Toy*, Miss K. Jocelyn; *The Spirit of Pantomime*, Miss Helen Lee; *Lord-in-Waiting*, Miss Lena Delphine; *Captain of the Guard-at-Arms*, Miss Harrison; *Master of the Ceremonies*, Miss E. Pritchard; *Master of the Horse*, Miss M. Shields; *Prime Minister*, Miss V. Knight; *Aide-de-Camp to the Prince*, Miss M. Bryer; *German Ambassador*, Miss A. Fricker; *Italian Ambassador*, Miss H. Hastings; *Russian Ambassador*, Miss Queenie Dudley; *Austrian Ambassador*, Miss L. Feverell.

26. ROBINSON CRUSOE: Pantomime by Horace Lennard, Music by Oscar Barrett. **Lyceum.** Cast: Immortal, *The Spirit of Adventure*, Miss Geraldine Somerset. Mortals—*Robinson Crusoe*, Miss Alice Brookes; *Mrs. Crusoe*, Mr. Victor Stevens; *Dan'l Hopkins*, Mr. Richard Blunt; *Polly Hopkins*, Miss Grace Lane; *Will Atkins*, Mr. Fred Emney; *Larboard*, Mr. Marius Girard; *Starboard*, Mr. E. Morehen; *Captain Truman*, Miss Susie Vaughan; *Midshipmite*, Miss Ida Muriel; *Sergeant of Marines*, Miss Lilian Holmes; *The Market Beadle*, Mr. Roy Kennett; *Oliver*, Miss Mellor; *Randolf*, Miss E. Gibbons; *Geoffrey*, Miss May Haddon; *Mark*, Miss L. Francis; *Nance*, Miss M. Mount; *Dora*, Miss Lena Lewis; *Maud*, Miss J. Chamberlain; *Margery*, Miss L. Augarde; *Little Daisy*, Miss Ethel Grace; *Dog*, Master L. Wilkes; *Goat*, Master Edwin Allen; *Parrot*, Mr. A. Gough; *Cat*, Master H. Linwood; *Hullabaloo*, Mr. Fred Storey; *Chut-Nee*, Mr. W. Ritter Riley; *Fiti-Fiti*, Mr. Fred Kitchen; *Talkee-Talkee*, Mr. Zanfretta; *Em-Cee*, Mr. Harry Kitchen; *Hanga-Mup*, Mr. Philippe; *Tripfoot*, Master Herbert Lamartine; *Niece*, Miss Florence Herbert; *Picee*, Miss Mary Norton; *Popsee*, Miss Catherine

Williamson; *Wopsee*, Miss Blanche Doris; *Ducksee*, Miss Pattie Marshall; *Kicksee*, Miss Constance Gordon; *Princess Pretti-Pretti*, Mdle. Zanfretta; *Friday*, Mr. Charles Lauri.

27. A WOMAN'S REASON: Play in Three Acts, by Charles H. E. Brookfield and F. C. Phillips. **Shaftesbury.** Cast: *Lord Bletchley*, Mr. Charles Brookfield; *The Rev. Cosmo Pretious*, Mr. Henry Kemble; *Captain Crozier*, Mr. Charles Coghlan; *Stephen D'Acosta*, Mr. Lewis Waller; *Algie*, Mr. Stewart Dawson; *Mr. McGeorge*, Mr. Hamilton Knight; *Martin Tutt*, Mr. E. J. Malyon; *James*, Mr. Leslie Thompson; *Footman*, Mr. Charles Goodhart; *Lady Bletchley*, Miss Carlotta Addison; *The Hon. Nina Keith*, Mrs. Tree; *Agatha Pretious*, Miss Maud Millett; *Curtice*, Miss Violet Stevens; *Leah D'Acosta*, Miss Florence West. Still running.

28. THE LATE MR. CASTELLO: A Farce in Three Acts, by Sydney Grundy. **Comedy.** Cast: *Captain Trefusis*, Mr. Leonard Boyne; *Sir Peto Wanklyn*, Mr. Cyril Maude; *Jack Uniacke*, Mr. J. G. Grahame; *Spencer*, Mr. J. Byron; *Mrs. Bickerdyke*, Miss Rose Leclercq; *Mrs. Castello*, Miss Winifred Emery; *Avice*, Miss Esmé Beringer. Still running.

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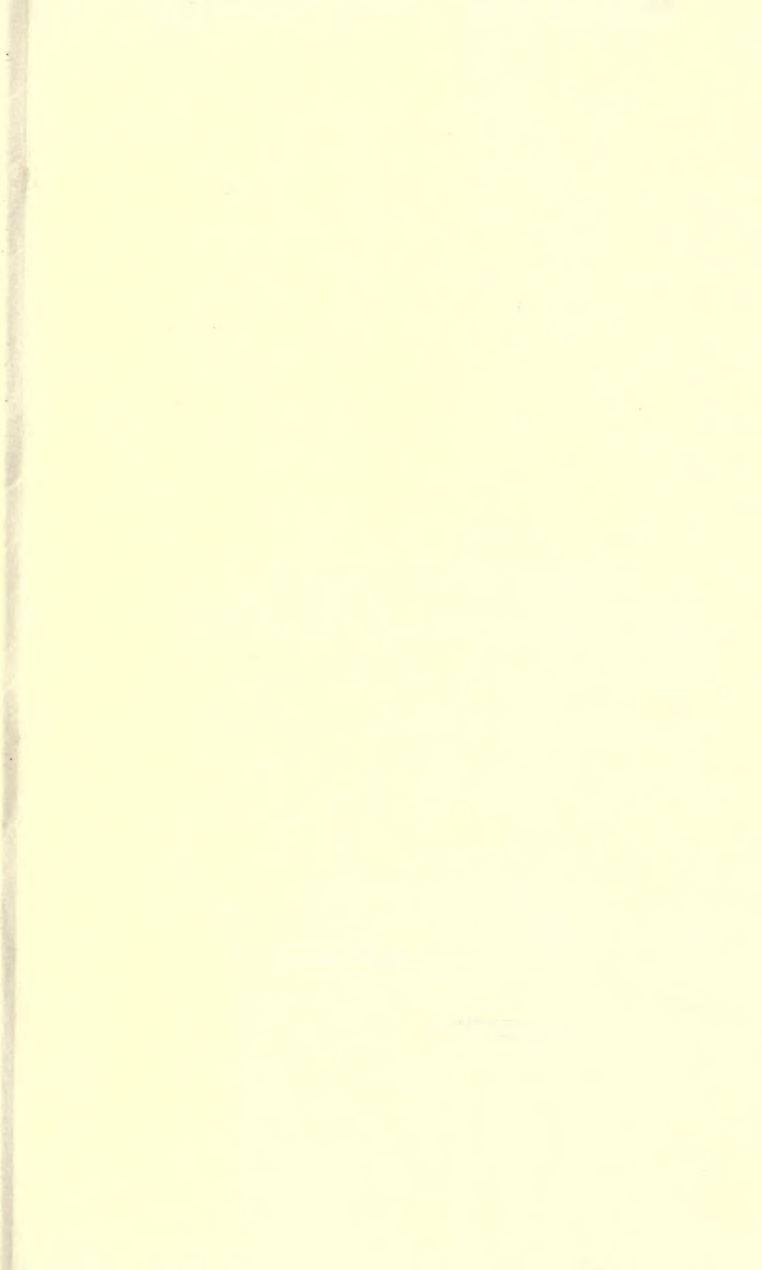
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